MAN
An Embryo God

L. W. ROGERS

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MAN: AN EMBRYO GOD

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By

L. W. ROGERS

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Man: An Embryo God

Nothing so stirs the depths of our being as the simple question of who we are and whence we came. It is true that such questions are not often asked. Completely absorbed in the affairs of the work-a-day world, engrossed with its business, professional and social life, the thoughts of men rarely leave this narrow stage of existence, the entrance to which is the cradle and the exit from which is the grave.

If, however, one would know something of his origin, something of his real and greater-than-physical self, if he would understand his relationship to the cosmic life of which our physical world is but a reflection, he may take a very simple but effective step in that direction. He may begin to move towards a comprehension of the mystery of being by a thoughtful consideration of the physical universe; for the moment we begin to reason about that which we know we gain new knowledge about that which we do not know. Let him begin with the fact which he knows best—the fact that he exists, that he thinks and feels and moves, that he walks upon the firm earth. But precisely what is the earth? A huge mass of matter that is wheeling ceaselessly through space with a precision so marvelous that its exact distance from any of the celestial bodies, at any given time, may be calculated hundreds of years in advance! There arises in the mind the thought of immensity, of cosmic order, of arrangement, of purposeful activity.

There are, however, those who insist that the universe exists by chance; that no consciousness has planned it and that no intelligence directs it; yet the more we think about the subject the clearer it becomes that wisdom is inherent in its manifestations. Energy without intelligence could not produce that which satisfies intelligence—that which intelligence perceives to be the fittest possible result. Even if we postulate original matter and energy, without intelligent direction that energy could neither produce nor maintain the order and balance we see about us. Take the one fact that, as things are wisely ordered in nature, power is possessed in proportion to the intelligence and opportunity to use it. If it were otherwise the race would perish. Think what would happen if the beasts of the jungle chanced to have intellects like men; or if a four-year-old boy had the physical strength of his father!

Everywhere in nature a marvelous balance of consciousness and power is in evidence.

In wholly different ways than the safe balancing of intelligence and power, a guiding wisdom preserves universal equilibrium. A striking example is in the even balance of the sexes. Science, with all her cleverness and efficiency, knows nothing whatever of this subject. Why it is that in all the various races of the earth there are born substantially the same number of males and females and why, after a war that kills males in large numbers, the proportion of male births increases until balance is restored, remains as great a mystery as life itself. Only the hypothesis that wisdom is inherent in nature can explain it. This balance of the sexes is as

carefully preserved in the lower kingdoms as in the higher and it requires little thought to perceive that without it the world would be overwhelmed by various kinds of calamity and ultimate disaster.

It is this marvelous balance which exists in all departments of nature that alone preserves us, which prevents wreck and ruin and which is strong evidence that profound wisdom directs and guides the visible universe. It plays force against force and thus holds in check the hand of blind destruction.

Sometimes men interfere and temporarily disturb that balance to their sorrow. A notable example of that was the introduction of rabbits into Australia, where none naturally existed. Because there was nothing there in nature to counterbalance them they rapidly multiplied into millions and became a destructive crop pest that no agency is now able to eliminate. An animal that in other parts of the world is harmless, because of climatic conditions and natural enemies, became a menace to prosperity and human welfare when men interfered with the natural order and placed it where nature did not produce it. They threw nature's forces slightly out of balance and must suffer the consequences.

To say that nature is intelligently superintended is not, however, quite accurate. It does not fully present the matter. It is nearer the truth to say that nature *is* intelligence, or wisdom. An inconceivably exalted order of consciousness pervades the universe and is its very foundation. All that we see in visible manifestation is the result of a mighty Consciousness expressing Itself in various ways to achieve specific results, and as marvelously as

though some invisible artist could, merely by his thought, change modeler's clay into forms of comedy or tragedy, or into expressions of delicate beauty or rugged strength. All nature is wisdom in manifestation and only because, in our speculations upon her processes, we adopt a working hypothesis too circumscribed to fit her deep and far-reaching purposes, do we fail to perceive that fact. Indeed, it is precisely because that wisdom, though akin to our own, is so immeasurably profound, that we find life the mystery that it is.

Wisdom, however, is but one of the attributes of that Supreme Intelligence of which nature is the visible expression. The attribute of power is self-evident and requires no comment. Its oneness, or unity, may be disposed of in simple terms. There is no disagreement about the fact that the sun is the one source of light, heat, energy and life, and that from that source has come the earth and the other planets of our solar system. All that lives is inter-related. How could it be otherwise if all arise from the one central stream of life that flows from, or through, the sun? A tree, a lake, a mountain, an insect, an animal, a man, have each and all grown from it. All forms of landscape are its expressions and all degrees of consciousness are its manifestations.

If all life is one, it naturally follows that the one Consciousness which animates it has the attribute of compassion. If the solar system is the Supreme Being in manifestation then the sun must be to Him what the physical body is to the soul, a focus in the

material world through which tangible expression becomes possible.

If all life is one then compassion within that one is axiomatic. A man does not hate himself nor any part of himself. The various kingdoms of nature must be to the Logos what the various members of the physical body are to us. All parts are necessarily regarded with equal benevolence. No such thing as favoritism could exist. All kingdoms of nature must be the same in the sight of the Supreme Being. The human kingdom to Him may be as the hand is to us, and the animal kingdom as the foot is to us. The hand is truly higher than the foot. The hands are extremely complex and perform duties far more intricate, yet the feet are indispensable and it is inconceivable that with a human being there can be any favoritism toward the hand or any discrimination against the foot. Equal goodwill there must be toward every part of the physical body. The absence of such benevolence would constitute insanity. The eyes, ears, all the organs of the physical senses, are constantly on guard in equal protection and defense of every part of the anatomy; otherwise the body would perish. Just as without that impartial goodwill toward the whole body it could not survive, so without the same principle the solar system could not endure. Back of the visible world, then, is a Supreme Being with the characteristics of wisdom, power and compassion, the source from which we came forth. Of that source of life we are each an evolving fragment, and if we name that source "God" then we are gods in the making.

If that hypothesis is sound—if we are literally

of the essential nature of deity, and are destined to go forward stage by stage in the unfolding of the spiritual power which that necessarily implies—it brings into our commonplace life a significance that is all but overwhelming. Such a view confers on man a dignity that lifts him above the petty things of life, and gives him the confidence and courage that enable him to successfully solve the problems of physical existence.

Those of opposite views will doubtless say that the average human being is anything but godlike and that, in the more backward nations, the race is ignorant, cruel and repulsive; that even in its highest types our civilization is marred by callous selfishness, by distressing political corruption, by shocking injustices, and that the civilized world can never really be sure that the horrors of widespread warfare will not at any moment engulf it. All that is quite true but it does not invalidate the premise laid down. The contention is not that we are gods, but gods in the making. The real question is whether humanity has the *essential nature* that will at last enable it to rise triumphant out of all its troubles.

If we turn from collective humanity to the individual, we shall find specific evidence of inherent divinity. The depraved portion of the race is always an exceedingly small part of it and the worst specimen among the lawless few is never without some trace of the virtues. There may be no outward indication of it but let some sudden emergency appeal to the God within and there is unexpected response. An incident from real life will illustrate this truth. In a Colorado mining camp, containing

some of the roughest specimens of the human family, two men worked at the task of sinking a shaft. The method followed was a primitive one. At the bottom of the shaft one of them worked, with pick and shovel, filling a huge miner's bucket, and his comrade on the surface then hoisted and emptied it, returning it for another load. It was drawn slowly upward with a rope and windlass fitted with a ratchet, so that the man who hoisted it could pause occasionally to rest, while brake and ratchet made the load secure. It was dangerous work, for any failure of the mechanism to hold the load would mean certain death to the man below. Rope, crank, brake and ratchet must be always in perfect condition to insure safety. Now in the ratchet there was an unknown flaw and at an evil moment, as the bucket neared the top, the ratchet snapped. It was one of those awful moments in which a human life hangs in the balance for the fraction of a second and a decision for life or death must be made instantaneously. If there were even time to catch up a stick or stone to throw into the cogs, the tragedy could be averted. A comparatively slight impediment would stop the windlass if used at the moment, but nothing would avail if it got under way; unless the cog wheels were choked *instantly* it would be too late. It was either death for his comrade below or sacrifice for the man above, and he did not hesitate. He jammed his arm into the wheels and sacrificed that to save his comrade. A rough fellow he was, wild and lawless, swaggering in drunken brutality about the camp every night, primitive and profane, as ready to shoot as to gamble, holding all law and

order in contempt, a quarrelsome, reckless ruffian; but when he was suddenly confronted by a circumstance that put him to the supreme test, he responded with the heroism of a god.

A little examination of the matter will convince one that such examples of valor are as common in what is called the lower walks of life as in that which is known as the higher. No tribe is so low in the human scale that it is without courage and a sense of honor. Among those who live nearest to nature, the hazards of life are greater and opportunities for courageous action are more frequent.

And just what is this thing that we call heroism? Two great and godlike virtues are combined in it —courage and self-sacrifice. Without both of them there can be no heroism. Sacrificing oneself for another is the highest expression of unselfishness. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," so taught the Master, and "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend." Heroism has been well defined as the possession of superhuman qualities. We get the word, itself, from the ancient Greeks who tried to imitate the gods.

Why is it that such lofty virtues appear to be the common property of the race and why are they found in its lowliest members? Why is the naked savage of the Australian wilderness, living on a level scarcely above the beasts, subsisting on a diet that includes wild roots and insects, ready to make war for a principle, brave in battle and capable of sacrifice for others? When we find certain exalted virtues characteristic of all classes, and exhibited at all levels of human evolution—virtues that no en-

vironment can hide and that no savagery can destroy—we are led irresistibly to the conclusion that the race is of divine origin. In what other possible way can we account for it? If it were true that mankind is the chance product of a mechanical and senseless cosmos why should godlike qualities be in evidence at the very threshold of the human kingdom? If, on the other hand, the human soul is a fragment of the Supreme Life, why should they not be? If man is of divine origin, if he is really a god in the making, it is most reasonable that even in racial infancy these superhuman qualities will give at least some evidence of their existence within him.

Among those who accept the divine origin of the race there are two widely different views about how man came into existence. Speaking very broadly, one view may be called the theological and the other the scientific. The first is many centuries old while the second is comparatively new, and grew up with the development of modern science. The theological view is that the human race was created substantially as we now see it and that it has been only a few thousands, or possibly tens of thousands, of years in existence. It is the belief that God brought abruptly into being the earth and all that it contains. The other view is that, while the Supreme Being is the author of all that exists, the process of creating the solar system was one of very slow, gradual becoming, extending over a vast period of time, representing literally hundreds of millions of years.

It is often assumed that those who accept the

hypothesis of evolutionary creation are materialists. No greater mistake could be made. Many distinguished scientists not only regard the existence of a Supreme Being as a certainty but are constantly fortifying that belief with facts obtained by the study of nature. There is also much confusion of thought about the relationship of evolution to Darwinism, and the fact that some of the chief tenets of the latter have lost their original standing in the scientific world has led to the erroneous conclusion that the evolutionary hypothesis has also been rejected. A point so vital in dealing with the problem of the origin of the race should be better understood. The relationship between Darwinism and the hypothesis of evolution is very much the same as that between the old geocentric theory in astronomy and the astronomical knowledge of today. The discovery that the ancient postulate was wrong destroyed the erroneous belief that the earth was the center of the solar system but it only put the science of astronomy on firm ground. Just so, some conclusions drawn by Darwin were, in the main, discredited by later knowledge, but that knowledge only strengthened the hypothesis of evolution.

The difference between evolution and Darwinism is precisely the difference between a set of facts and a theory about those facts. The facts about which all scientists agree are that the earth is ages old; that life, as that term is ordinarily understood, began in the water on this planet a great many millions of years ago; that an immense period of time lies between that beginning of water-life and the point at which the forms, through which that

life expressed itself, developed the spinal column; that another vast period of time passed before there was any trace of vertebrate animal life on the land; that from the simple forms of the earlier periods have emerged the existing forms and that all highly evolved forms have come to their present complexity through millions of years of gradual development.

Darwinism was merely a theory formed from the facts known in Darwin's day. Its two most conspicuous points were, first, that environment and natural selection are sufficient to account for the diversification of life into species and, second, that evolutionary progress could be explained by heredity—by acquired characteristics being transmitted to offspring. Later knowledge has shown that both of these theories are without sufficient foundation in fact, but about the all-important truth of evolution, itself, there is no argument in the scientific world. Whether the human physical form developed from a lower type closely related to the monkey seems to be of little importance in view of the fact that our ancestry, according to all schools of scientific thought, must necessarily run back to still lower forms ages before the monkey existed. It should be clearly understood that there is no debate in the scientific world about the *fact* of evolution but only about precisely why and how lower and simpler forms develop into higher and more complex forms.

The difference between what may be called the theological and the scientific views is tremendous and cannot be too clearly defined in the mind. The one view is that things were originally created what they are now and that they shall thus remain; that

a bird, an animal, a man, have always been what they now are and that they will never be anything else; that the lower types of the human race were created savages and will forever remain savages. The other view is that an evolutionary creation has been in progress for ages and that it will continue. That nothing is now, in form, what it has been, nor will it continue to be in the future what it now is; that the whole of the bird creation, for example, has, as the student of biology well knows, evolved from the reptiles; that the evolutionary advance in the human kingdom has been from the mental and moral level of savagery to the present civilization, that if the prehistoric past could be explored the trail would lead backward to the caveman, backward to a humanity without a single vestige of civilization, back to some numerous but now extinct and unknown animal; and back still farther to the point where that animal, in turn, evolved from a remoter and still lower type.

The idea of our animal origin will not seem in the least repulsive if it is rightly considered. As a matter of course, the development of consciousness, at any point of its evolution, is congruous with the form through which it is at that time being expressed. Such consciousness *as we now have* has never been expressed through an animal form nor even through the body of a savage. Precisely as our present state of consciousness is satisfied with the human body and our present environment so our much lower state of consciousness, ages ago, was satisfied with the animal body and environment. It could then conceive of nothing higher. When, in

the immensity of the future, we have risen above the human level to the superhuman we shall have even more reason to feel repelled at the thought that we were ever so low as the human kingdom than we now have to feel annoyed that we were once only at the animal stage. The flaw in the popular thought on that point is that it values too lightly the lower kingdoms and fails to recognize the fact that all stages of life are equally necessary.

To put it differently, there is no more reason to feel repelled by the fact that the foundation of our mental and moral being was laid in lower forms than there is for an adult to be sad because he was once an infant with hardly a glimmer of common sense. The most distinguished and dignified ruler was once a baby whose chief ambition was to succeed in putting his toe into his mouth! People sometimes say it is too much to believe that the human mind could have been the animal mind even though it was a million years ago. The contrast is too great, they think. Go out into the park of a great city on a fine Sabbath day and watch the passing throngs. The dignified state or national official, the alert man of the world, the judge with grave demeanor, the financier, the author, the fastidious patrons of fashion—mark them well and then reflect that only a few decades ago they were all babies creeping about on the carpet, delighted with a red rattle to shake, a cat's tail to pull, or a dirty crust to munch! Select the greatest geniuses of the earth, the most famous inventors, the ablest scientists, the shrewdest statesmen, the most distinguished linguists, and only a fraction of a century ago they were

all babies whose chief amusement was to rattle a spoon in a dish and whose entire vocabulary of gurgling imbecility consisted of "Goo, goo!" The difference between that and their present attainments is much greater than the difference between the mind of a dog and the intelligence of a man.

Each kingdom in nature marks the point attained in climbing the evolutionary ladder and one rung is not more important than another. The very highest is of no more value than the lowest. Each is an integral part of the whole and without the lowest the highest could not have been attained.

If we think of the origin of the human race, of the countless millions of souls that exist, we must first imagine the one Supreme Consciousness as creating a condition within Itself which produced that manifestation of Itself that we call matter, and of the Supreme life being involved in that matter as billions, not millions, of tiny seeds sown in soil. The analogy, however, is by no means perfect. A seed quickly grows into a plant; also, the sparks of the Supreme life evolve into gods, but the process requires a period as much longer as a god is greater than a plant—a period of literally millions of years. Let us try to trace the process of that evolutionary growth from spiritual infancy to spiritual manhood, and understand in what way nature calls the latent divine power into activity, as the savage slowly evolves into a civilized man and at the civilized stage slowly changes from the commonplace human being into a god with wisdom, power and compassion that is far beyond his present comprehension.

The difference between a savage human being

and a superman is enormous; yet they clearly have characteristics in common. It is like the difference between infancy and maturity—great, yet it merely represents the change from the potential to the actual. Savages as well as supermen have mind and heart qualities. The difference between them, though tremendous, is nevertheless a difference of degree alone. The superman has wisdom that comprehends deep secrets of nature. The savage understands little but he *reasons* about it. The Australian black men, of the lowest type, probably are as near as human beings can be to the animal kingdom. Even in that part of the great island continent where the white man wears ordinary clothing, the tribes wear no particle of clothing whatever from birth to death. Mud huts serve for shelter, and their food includes such insects as grasshoppers and locusts. Expert in action, they catch small fish with their hands and eat them alive as they catch them, precisely as a cat would. Yet, in a limited way, these savages reason accurately as well as hunt skillfully. To locate the wild bees' store of honey they contrive, with a twig and a tiny bit of gum from a tree, to stick a flake of wild cotton on a bee as it alights at the edge of a stream. As the bee flies to its home the savage notes the direction. He then goes a distance down the stream and repeats the process. The second bee also flies straight to the home tree. The savage now knows by the flight of the bees, traced by the bit of cotton through the air, not only in which direction the bee tree is located but, on account of the different angles of the courses taken by the bees he also knows about how far away it

is, and he finds it without the least difficulty. His reason has saved time and exertion. He also studies the habits of the wild fowl and, unlike the white sportsman, needs no gun nor ammunition to capture them.

These savages are apparently about as kind to each other as we are. They have a tribal patriotism, as the white man has a national patriotism and they are brave enough to do battle in defense of their miserable homes. They have certain tribal customs, the violation of which by another tribe will bring on a group duel with clubs and spears, in which a selected number of perhaps twenty from each tribe will fight out the appeal to arms instead of resorting to general warfare.

It is by no means certain that civilized peoples have not something to learn from these savages. What a pleasant improvement it would be on modern warfare if we could select a limited number to fight it out and choose them from among those most directly concerned with the cause of the war!

It is not easy to imagine those Australian savages evolving into supermen, into masters of wisdom and compassion, but we *can* understand that they can improve, that they can strengthen any virtues they now have no matter how feeble those virtues are. We can understand that, *given time enough,* those savages will slowly awaken to a desire for something better than their present animal-like life. As they see more and more of the white race, dissatisfaction with their present life and environment will arise. Occasionally one of their number who has accompanied some traveler as his servant will return

with strange stories of the world outside their wilderness. Little by little the desire to imitate civilized people will grow, and a few generations later they will be using tools instead of empty hands and building with boards instead of with mud. Huts will finally give way to houses. Subsistence upon wild roots, insects and game will eventually be superseded by very primitive agriculture, and agriculture in turn will be followed by simple manufacturing. In a few centuries, perhaps, they will have risen to a stage in evolution corresponding to that of the American Indians. As agriculture and manufacturing increase, trade naturally develops, and then tribal boundaries and differences begin to disappear. As centuries pass the tribes evolve into a nation, schools are established and minds and morals enter upon the stage of purposeful development. It is not too much of a tax upon the imagination to see those Australian savages changing, in a period of perhaps many thousand years, to a civilization somewhat resembling our own. It is merely a matter of allowing time enough for mental and moral evolution.

But we must not overlook the very important point that we are now speaking of savages rising to civilization by the process of copying an existing civilization, whereas what has to be explained is how the original savagery of the planet, with no civilization to imitate, evolved to its present status. That is a very different matter indeed.

And here we are confronted with a problem. We can see the reasonableness of evolutionary development. We know that by the experiences of life we

evolve clearer insight and understanding, greater wisdom in dealing with affairs, and gradually become more proficient mentally and a little stronger morally; and so we have no doubt that the small mental and moral store of the savage can also be increased by experience; but equally well we know that such growth is exceedingly slow. We know that even at our stage of evolution where the necessity for growth is recognized, an experience must be repeated again and again before it results in a permanent change of character, and that with the average human being desire is so much stronger than will that year after year his best intentions fail to hold their own against it. We are well aware, too, that a civilized environment does not change a savage into a civilized man. Only thousands of years of the experiences of life can do that. If the individual savage could only remain here forever we could account for civilization easily enough.

A vital point in our problem is that the theory of mental and moral heredity finds no support in the experiments of investigators and is not recognized by the scientific world. The Darwinian theory, which set up the hypothesis that acquired traits are transmitted to offspring, had to be abandoned because, after long testing, it failed utterly to agree with the facts observed. There is a certain sort of physical heredity but not heredity of mental or moral qualities. The family resemblance is handed down to posterity, but the son of a genius is not a genius and the sons of a saint may be renegades. Among savage tribes certain mutilations, such as making holes through the nose and elongating the

lobes of the ears, have been practiced for countless generations but the babies in these tribes are always born with normal features. The Chinese custom of confining the feet of the girl babies of the aristocracy in tiny shoes so that when grown a woman had the foot of a baby, was continued for centuries but the children of these women always had feet of normal size. The descendants of a philanthropist are not necessarily even generous and the children of an athlete are not born athletes. The most striking fact that has emerged from the ceaseless scientific search for the truth about the human being is that every individual evolves qualities and capacities but does not transmit them to others. If, then, the savage cannot stay long enough to evolve the traits of civilization within himself and if he cannot get it from his parents, how are we to explain civilization? With these two facts before us—first, the almost imperceptibly slow growth of mentality and morality in the race and, second, the fact that what the parents acquire is not transmitted to offspring, how is the undoubted fact of evolution explained? How are we to account for the rise of savages to civilized life in ten thousand years, or in even a million years, if each of them remains but sixty or eighty years, or at most a hundred years? Modern science is today searching, searching, searching for a solution to that problem. Think for a moment of what a problem it is! The fact of evolution is positively established but no theory ever put forward to show *how* the race evolves has been able to explain it. It is now admitted that the hypotheses of Goethe and Lamarck and Darwin and Wallace

and Weismann are all inadequate, but some of these hypotheses have been distinctly useful. They have set hundreds of scientists to work on the problem, and the most impressive thing that they have found is that there is no evidence to support the theory of mental and moral heredity. How, then, does the race evolve? In the case of our Australian savage, for example, if it takes a man many thousands of years to attain the civilized level, then in a lifetime only a start can be made in the work. Therefore each savage dies just when he is beginning to move toward the civilized stage and, according to popular belief, passes on into eternity. The deaths are made good by births, but if the baby savage is just as savage as his father was when he was born, he will get no farther toward civilized life than his father did. The popular belief is that they all come as savages and go as savages and, if that is true, they have been passing on thus for millions of years to populate invisible regions.

If a human being arriving here as a baby savage is just beginning existence and if at death he passes either to extinction or to eternal life elsewhere, and cannot transmit what little mental and moral improvement he has made to his descendants, it is perfectly clear that the race could never have risen from savagery to civilization. How, then, can we possibly explain the evolution of the race and why are we so completely baffled in the search for the evolutionary method? The difficulty lies in the fact that the definition of the human being is too materialistic. We are trying to explain life in terms

of matter instead of explaining evolution in terms of life and consciousness.

If we put together a few of the points already discussed we shall have made a start toward understanding how human evolution takes place. Grouped together, these points are, that the human soul is an individualized center of consciousness within the universal life; that it is literally a fragment of the Supreme Consciousness, that its relationship to the source of life is like that of a seed to the plant which produces it; that man is a potential god and has latent within him all the attributes and powers of the Supreme Being; that through evolutionary development these are being slowly brought into expression and that in this ages-long process he will evolve from a potential god to an actual one.

If we put aside the erroneous idea that man is a material being, beginning existence at birth and ending it at death, and regard him as what he really is, an eternal spiritual being undergoing an ages-long evolution in visible and invisible regions, we shall be in a position to understand racial progress. If he is a portion of the Supreme Life he has eternal existence. An immense period of evolution lies behind him and also before him and his term of life here in a physical body shrinks at once to a mere incident that it is in the soul's career. What is its reasonable relationship to the whole journey of evolution that begins when the spark of the supreme life is involved in matter and ends when the soul at last rises from the human to the superhuman level? The longest physical life compared to the vast evolutionary journey is, of course, very

much less than one day compared to a lifetime. To concern ourselves only with a physical life will no more explain the eternal man than knowing what a certain person did on a particular day will give us his life history. We must know about the remainder of his life in order to gain any real knowledge of him, and to comprehend man's evolution we must know something of his life beyond his brief physical career. There is a well-known method by which science works from the known to the unknown. A theory is constructed that seems to embrace the probable facts and then it is tested by as many facts as we know in order to determine whether it is a reasonable hypothesis. Let us construct a theory that will explain the mystery of how, although the traits acquired by experience here cannot be transmitted from parents to children, the race nevertheless steadily grows in mental and moral worth. It should not be difficult to do that for the terms of the problem are simple. If it is established that the soul can evolve only by experience and that many thousands of years' experience are required for his human evolution, and he remains here less than a hundred years, then he must either get the experience elsewhere or return here for more of it. It must necessarily be the one or the other. But where else *could* he get the experience furnished by material life? Obviously, nature would not duplicate this world in the life beyond. That would not be in alignment with the wisdom which is so conspicuous in her economy. Granting immortality, if the life beyond were but a repetition of this one, why did not nature arrange for us to remain here

forever? Why pass on to something else that is the same? That other life, being superphysical must, in the very nature of things, be a higher phase of existence than this. It must be to this one as manhood is to childhood. What, then, would be the reasonable thing? If we have not done with race childhood here shall we pass on to live there the life of adults permanently, or only to a vacation among spiritual adults and then return to resume mental and moral growth in this world of material things?

If it were not for the erroneous notions upon the subject of man's nature and constitution that have been dinned into our ears from infancy the idea of going at the time of death and returning in another birth would not seem to be a strange one. Let us look farther into that belief. If we have a very great deal to learn by our association with matter and have learned but a small part of it in "three score years and ten" it may be asked why it is necessary to pass on at death. Why not stay until our mental and moral evolution is finished? Good reasons at once occur to the mind. The monotony of such a plan would be intolerable. It is change and variety that make life endurable. One may greatly enjoy reading but if he were obliged to read continuously it would become unbearable. When weary we thoroughly enjoy sleep; but how monotonous it becomes if we are confined to bed for even a few days! Many of us keenly enjoy our work but too much of it becomes a tyranny. Under the most favorable conditions the average human being cannot attend school continuously more than three

months without a rest and each year he must have a prolonged vacation. That is a world-wide custom established by centuries of experience. The same rule necessarily applies to the whole of the journey in human evolution. If, at the least, it takes tens of thousands of years to evolve from the savage to the superman it is impossible that the work could be done continuously. As in the case of the student, who furnishes a good comparison because he is undergoing a process of mental evolution, there must be vacations periodically or the continual strain would destroy health and sanity. If it be established that a prolonged period of physical plane experience is necessary to change the human being into a superman then periods of rest or "vacations" from the work become a necessity as a matter of course; and that is undoubtedly just what death is—a temporary cessation of the strenuous life in a physical body.

If that is a reasonable assumption how, then, can a future return to physical life for the purpose of continued sentient experience be accomplished? It is surely no more mysterious than the soul's previous arrival here as a baby in this life. It would seem that the difficulty which people have in seeing the reasonableness of such return is that the mind has been filled with the false teaching of the sudden and miraculous creation of the soul—a view that disregards evolution altogether and that is hostile to all natural laws. If we once see the soundness of the idea of the immanence of God, of the truth that the soul is literally a fragment of the Supreme Life involved in matter, and therefore of its im-

mortality and its pre-existence, all the difficulties will vanish.

Before the soul appeared here at birth in this life it must have long existed. How did each of us come into possession of the baby body that grew into the adult form we now occupy? Here we must consider for a moment precisely what the body is. We know, of course, that it is a mass of organic matter so arranged as to enable the consciousness or soul to use it as an instrument of action—as a mechanism by which knowledge can be gained; but what *is* this mass of matter, in its specific relationship to a particular soul?

Before that can be rightly understood we must free the mind from the illusion that life and matter are separate and distinct things. Nature knows no such division. Life and matter are one and inseparable. They are but varying expressions of the one eternal energy that we know by many names, among which are light, heat, consciousness, mentality. They are but different manifestations of one thing, as various fruits are the products of one soil.

When that source of being expresses itself in form, we know it as matter. When it shows forth as consciousness we call it life. When that life manifests itself through a low type, as in the animal kingdom, we name it instinct. When it expresses itself through the human form we call it intelligence, and when it reaches its highest level we know it as spirituality; but always it is the one life, varying in its manifestation according to the medium of its expression.

There is perhaps no simpler way of putting it than to say that matter is the lowest expression of life. Some schools of thought declare that there is no matter; but that is a confusing way of putting the idea. There is unquestionably a something that we have named "matter"; therefore matter exists and is known to the physical senses. The difference between life and matter is, in one aspect, like the difference between snow and water. Snow can be transformed into water and water can be converted into snow. They are different forms of the same element. Likewise life and matter are but different expressions or manifestations of the one thing that is the basis and foundation of the universe, and that is variously named First Cause, God, Oversoul, Supreme Being. The physicist can probe into matter as far as the electron, a mere center of force. If his process of disintegration could be carried far enough matter would reach the point where it is indistinguishable from life. Therefore, in one sense it is true that there is nothing but life in the universe.

What, then, from this viewpoint is the physical body? It is only a *material manifestation* of an individualized portion of the universal life. It is a center of consciousness that is tangibly expressed and the tangible part of it, that we call physical, must necessarily be an exact expression of its inward or spiritual self. At any given point of its evolution the outward part of the self (the body) must correspond to its inner or spiritual characteristics; for it is the life, the consciousness, the inner self which is clothed with the tangible part of itself.

We must, therefore, regard the soul and its

body as having a fundamental relationship which is deep and inviolable, for the mass of matter in which it expresses itself (the body) is a part of itself, a phase of its being, a manifestation of itself that changes, indeed, for all things are constantly changing, but which changes only as the soul, whose expression it is, changes from year to year as evolution slowly proceeds.

When and where the soul appears in the material world can have no relationship to what we call accident. We use the word "accident" to indicate an occurrence in which there is absence of purpose or intention—a purely fortuitous event. Only a materialist could use the word in relation to the origin of the consciousness of a human being and its subsequent career. If our solar system is the result of plan and purpose there is no place for the purely accidental within it. The *apparently* accidental event is merely a result, the cause of which we are unable to locate or comprehend.

In the long evolutionary journey through the lower kingdoms and in the early period of our human evolution we must, of course, have associated together in various ways that would give rise to appropriate future results, and would bring certain souls into certain future relationships, very much as human association works out in daily life. Many people whom we meet here we shall not meet again because we set up no cause which will bring it about. Others whom we meet we shall meet again either occasionally or often as the case may be, because of some natural attraction to them, or because of some mutual interest that was discovered, or because

for business, professional or purely social reasons, we did or said something which will bring us together again. Now, if, as every evolutionist who is not a materialist must believe, the soul, the individualized consciousness, is ages old and has slowly developed to its present estate, then association with each other must have gone on, and must be going on, quite apart from physical life. We cannot escape the belief that souls, under such circumstances, would naturally drift into great divisions, and lesser groupings, corresponding to races, nations, and even families. These associations and established relationships of the past must necessarily operate as causes that help to determine the present nation, family, environment and circumstances of any particular person. When the soul appeared here in a baby body it came to the family where it entered physical life because it had certain ties with some other soul, or souls, in the family group, or because there were obligations to be paid or benefits to be received, or because there were certain lessons there to be learned, or because, all things considered, it was a better place than any other for it to enter the material world. The arrival at that time and place is the inevitable result of all the previous complex causes related to that soul.

The mere taking possession of the baby body before birth does not seem to be a very remarkable matter. In the phenomenon of mediumship, which is now too well attested by many responsible investigators to be lightly dismissed even by the most skeptical, we have an illustration of the facility with which a so-called "dead" person takes temporary

possession of the physical body of another and speaks through it. There is the difference, however, between birth into a physical body and trance possession of a body, that in the latter case the discarnate soul that speaks through the physical mechanism of another is using for the moment a mature body while the soul that arrives here as a baby is using a nascent physical body as its instrument of expression. The intellectual difference between early childhood and manhood does not represent a change in the soul but a growth of the body through which the soul is expressing itself. When we arrived here at birth we, the real self, the soul, the consciousness, were only very partially here. We were still functioning chiefly on inner planes whence the soul comes. A fragment of our true self, to so speak, came through to the material world to animate the baby body. But we, the true self, continued for a time in the invisible world, the habitat of the soul. Little by little, as the infant body grew, more and more of our life and intelligence came down into it. For many years the slow growth of body and the gradual increase of the intelligence that could be expressed through it, continued. As the brain developed and matured the soul expressed more and more its mental and moral qualities; not because it was evolving them thus swiftly but because the growth and increasing maturity of its physical body made it possible to express more of them. To put it differently, the body is born in a day but the soul spends many years in the process of arriving in the material world, for it *can* come

through into expression only as the brain develops through the years of childhood.

Thus we began our physical world pilgrimage only a little while ago. We shall remain here a few years longer. This body will die and we shall pass on. Where? The annihilation of the individualized consciousness is impossible if we are of the essential nature of the deity. Do we go to some heaven—some ecstatic state of consciousness to remain forever? Why? If life here has made but a slight change in us why come here at all if we are leaving at death to live forever in celestial regions? Is it not more reasonable to believe that death is merely the temporary cessation of life in a physical body—a rest period after the strenuous activity, the turmoil, the work, the anxiety, the physical and mental strain, of this trying sort of experience? If so, if the soul at death is deliberately withdrawing from a physical instrument that, for various reasons no longer well serves its purpose and because, too, the time for rest has come, why should it not return to material life when the period of rest is over? It is no more wonderful that we should do so again than that we are here now. A second birth, or a hundredth birth, is no more marvelous than a first birth.

And thus goes forward nature's work of changing men into gods: a life here in the physical world, long or short, as may be determined by all foregoing causes; then the death of the physical body, which releases the soul from the material world; then a period of life in the spiritual realm where the experience gained through the physical body is trans-

muted into wisdom and skill, thus lifting the soul to a higher point in evolution; then the return here by the same process by which we arrived in this life; again the gathering of experience which can be only very partially assimilated here while constant activity engrosses the mind; then again the release that we misname death, the complete transmutation, on inner planes, of the experiences accumulated here and, with increasing wisdom, power and compassion the return again for still more experience which shall lift us a stage higher toward the level of the gods. Thus we return repeatedly to material expression.

On the evolutionary road every god-in-the-making can travel rapidly or slowly. He may loiter along the way, life after life, for an enormous cycle of time or he may swiftly finish the journey in the merest fraction of the normal period. Many specific rules have been given for quickening the pace but there is a general principle that may be applied by anybody without specific study and without much planning. It is simply to live a life of strenuous activity, with as little thought of oneself as possible. Activity and progress are very closely related in the material world. Heroism is the highest expression of physical life and there is no heroism without action. One can't sit in an easy chair in the shade and be a hero!

The strenuous life, however, must not be permitted to drift into mere accumulation of money, or of its equivalents, for in that direction lies spiritual defeat. The result of making material gain the chief aim of life is that if the quest is not successful

there will never be time for anything else. The man will go on trying to accumulate a fortune until he dies. On the other hand, if he is successful, that very success is liable to remove the average man from useful pursuits and make him worthless to the world for the remainder of his life. The penalty for such a course is that he loses the opportunity for soul growth that comes to all who are usefully active. He also loses his liberty. As certainly as there are "prisoners of poverty" there are also prisoners of wealth. Thirty years ago there was a young man, strong mentally, morally and physically, who was thinking constantly and working continuously for the welfare of the race. Unfortunately, he discovered a gold mine and he has not been worth a nickel to humanity since.

Poverty is undesirable, but it is better than wealth if that wealth arrests the growth of the soul. Poverty at least compels activity of mind and body. It evolves resourcefulness. It develops skill in action. It awakens sympathy. It stimulates the sense of human interdependence. It leads to varied experience and to get experience is the purpose of physical existence. Wealth, if it takes a man out of the game of life, is a curse. It hedges him about with social restrictions, cultivates vanity, stimulates pride, limits initiative and narrows his field of experience. If we apply the same principles outside the human race and thus get rid of the personal factor, it is easy to see how it works. Compare a lap dog with a common cur. Like a man who has made his fortune and retired to the luxurious life of nothingness, a lady's lap dog has perfect comfort and in-

finite leisure. Its material wants are guaranteed for life. It will be protected from the winds of adversity. No rude members of the canine race can disturb it. It is as secure as its mistress. Both economically and socially it has reached the goal. It has no problems to solve, nothing to desire, nothing to do and nothing to think. The body is torpid and the brain is at rest.

The stray cur on the streets is a thousand times more fortunate. He is engaged in the evolutionary game of development. He is finding his food and fighting his battles. From morning to midnight he is mentally busy and physically active, declaring war, negotiating peace, figuring out his menu and locating the provender! His personal problems are numerous and pressing, including the ever-present one of retaining a whole hide; and the result is that he evolves alertness, courage, sagacity and endurance. If he succeeds in attaching himself to some boy he will also rapidly develop loyalty and affection, and altogether will probably live more and evolve more, mentally and morally, in a month than the lap dog of luxury will in its lifetime. The same principle applies to human evolution. Neither poverty nor great wealth is desirable, but poverty has its compensations while wealth has its dangers. The circumstances that stimulate mental and moral development are the ideal conditions for the human being.

One splendid service of Theosophy is that it teaches definitely, precisely, the principles by which one may go swiftly forward in his evolution and have almost immediate proof of their potency. With

thought, emotion and action one may work to a definite plan and become that which he would be. Would he have a useful, peaceful life? Would he be free from defamation? Would he be a stranger to Calumny? Would he make sure that Slander's lying lips shall never speak his name? Then let him check every criticism of the conduct of other people; refuse to listen to gossip's frivolous chatter, and evil reports will shun him and seek their own affinities even as slimy reptiles seek the swamps.

Would he stimulate others to seek the light, to live an exalted life and move swiftly forward toward spiritual illumination and power? Then let him put aside the trivial things of life. Let him think and live as a god himself and he shall see the miracle of the divine fire kindled in other men.

Would he be fearless and walk the ways of earth unharmed and unafraid? Then he himself must be harmless in thought and action. He must feel loyal friendship for every human being and the cities of the earth shall be peopled with his friends.

Would he be a fortress of strength in times of stress and storm, when the flood of falsehood overwhelms the facts, when Slander masquerades as Truth, when those about him are helpless and dismayed, when Intuition's flame burns low and baffled Intellect seeks in vain the way through a tangled maze of lies? Then let him feel a passionate loyalty to Truth in the most trivial things of life, and he shall be her champion in her hour of need and tear the mask from Slander's hideous face that all the world may know her.

"But that means ceaseless effort through all

one's life," cries the timid. It does; but the thoughtful will understand. Only the foolish will seek the paths of ease and indolence in a world whose very difficulties are designed to evolve men into gods—a world in which every obstacle develops strength, in which every effort will become future power. The wise will joyously accept life as it is and use its troubles and its trials, its vexations and defeats, to evolve the giant strength of soul that shall finally break the last restraining bond and, triumphant over death itself, become a god whose wisdom and power shall guide and guard the weaker ones on life's tempestuous way.

Soul Powers and Possibilities

One of the most striking things within the knowledge of mankind is the fact that with all her cleverness and skill, science is unable to detect any difference between the cells that finally develop into a plant, an animal and a man. A great scientist, equipped with the best microscope that mechanical genius can produce, stands silent and baffled before the problem. One of these bits of protoplasm is to become a forest tree, a monarch of the wood that shall fling its sturdy arms against the storms for a century. Another is to become a jungle beast, a lurking impersonation of murder with noiseless step and cruel heart, a living terror to the hapless. The third is to become a human being, a man of soul and conscience, an image of God himself in wisdom,

power and compassion. And yet each of the three makes its entrance into the visible world in the same material vehicle. All look the same and so far as we know are the same. Each is a medium of evolution for unfolding inherent powers. Beyond that we know nothing. Behind that lies the mystery of life. The great astronomer who comprehends the wondrous movement of the stars, who nightly gazes into that enchanting dome studded with a hundred million suns and measures distances between worlds so accurately that the exact time of an eclipse may be known a century in advance—this man of marvelous intellect and the serpent that creeps upon the ground begin their journey through the world from the same base, mere specks of undiffering protoplasm.

Why does one cell become a reptile and another become a man? Something that we cannot grasp or analyze enters this matter from the world unseen. It is life coming into the visible. The forms we see, whether of plants, animals or men, are but the external expressions of the life within. Form is the medium through which evolution is accomplished; the aggregation of visible matter that invisible life draws about it for the purpose of functioning in the material world. Huxley, with the aid of his microscope, gives us this vivid description:

"Strange possibilities lie dormant in this semi-fluid globule. Let a moderate supply of warmth reach its watery cradle and the plastic matter undergoes changes so rapid and yet so steady and purpose-like in their succession that one can only compare them to those operated by a skilled modeler upon

a formless lump of clay. As with an invisible trowel the mass is divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller portions, until it is reduced to an aggregation of granules not too large to build withal the finest fabrics of the nascent organism. And, then, it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body, pinching up the head at one end, the tail at the other, and fashioning flank and limb with due proportions in so artistic a way, that, after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than the microscope would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skillful manipulation to perfect his work."

The universe is a vast panorama of evolving life. Evolution, progress, growth — this is the great thought nature forces upon the mind no matter in what direction we turn. All of nature's kingdoms are evolving. We ourselves are making a swift journey from infancy to age. Nations rise, mature, decline and die out, to be followed by others of a higher type. Race follows race and from decaying civilizations spring better ones. Planets themselves grow old, lose vitality and disintegrate, while others are forming from nebulous matter. Throughout the universe there is ceaseless change, eternal progress. In this fact lies the hope of man. What he now is he need not remain. Anything he can imagine he may achieve. Any power he can picture may be his. Child of the Universe, he is, like it evolving, unfolding. But the rapidity with which he evolves necessarily depends upon his knowledge of the laws of which he is the subject, and of which

he may become the master. In his physical consciousness he knows much of physical and mental powers but little of soul powers or how to acquire them.

One of the most useful things that could come back to the people today is the old philosophy and the ancient Christian teaching of the immanence of God; that the Creator literally lives in every atom that exists; that every creature from man downward is an expression of His life; that each is, in very fact, *a part* of the Supreme Being, only dimly and vaguely, or perhaps not at all, realizing this stupendous fact. Yet in this sublime truth is the foundation of immortality and the possibility of all power. We are most literally the sons of God and through the process of evolution we shall all in time attain the divine wisdom and power characteristic of the Christs and Buddhas of humanity. For some the process will be a long one indeed. Millions of years must elapse before the goal is reached. But for others the transition will be swift, covering a period of comparatively short time. Whether we shall grope painfully toward the light for what seems to our present consciousness like an eternity or evolve the soul powers and attain their wondrous possibilities in a limited number of incarnations depends of course upon the interest we take in the matter and the attention we give to it.

To the person who is willing to cooperate with nature in the development of the soul powers latent within him rapid progress is possible. But of course this transformation from comparative ignorance to divine wisdom, from helplessness to godlike power,

cannot be brought about in some miraculous, instantaneous way. *It is a process of evolving,* of growing from spiritual infancy to spiritual manhood, but the growth may be a swift unfolding in the light of theosophic knowledge, as a bud opens into bloom while the sunlight falls upon it, or it may be a painfully slow process accomplished in the gloom of ignorance.

Knowledge and power are two names for one thing. There can be no power without knowledge, without enlightenment. All possible power is eternally existent in the universe and it becomes available to each individual as knowledge of the universe is attained. As civilized people we are using steam and electricity to carry forward many complex processes of commerce and manufacture that sustain the life of the race. Were we to be replaced tomorrow by an equal number of savages, their ignorance of what to them would be the secrets of our civilization would render them powerless to sustain life in such an environment and they would promptly perish. Most literally knowledge is power.

This is none the less true of other planes than this—that knowledge is power. Spiritual power is also the result of enlightenment. Indeed, it *is* enlightenment. In what we call the waking consciousness we have but a fragmentary expression of the ego that each of us is. It is as much of us as can come through the physical brain and body and be expressed in the physical world. Some can express much, some but little. Some are very wise and some very ignorant, some very capable and some very helpless; but not because the egos are wise and

stupid; only because more or less of the true self can gain expression in the physical life. The intellectual difference between the philosopher and the peasant, between the great inventor and the ignoramus, is merely one of human development—of having reached a point in evolution where much or little of the self can be expressed in the visible world. It becomes then a matter of tremendous importance to know something of the process by which more and more of the wisdom and power of the soul, or self, may be expressed in daily life; for upon that depends happiness.

The method by which spiritual illumination is attained is no new thing although it is so little understood in our modern civilization. For ages the science of the soul has been the highest study of the race and the way in which men might live in order to enter upon the path that leads to rapid development was taught in the ancient civilizations with mathematical exactitude. In the early days of the Christian Church this science of the soul had its place and those who most earnestly desired to enter upon the upward way found that very desire the means of contact with the teaching not given to the indifferent masses. In this inner teaching of the early Christian Church, as in the systems of its predecessors, there was one word of vital significance. It was *purification.* Purification must precede all acquirement of power. It was, and is, the foundation of all occult sciences. Without purity of mind and body there will not only be failure to attain complete success but great danger in the use of the partial knowledge acquired.

Purification, then, is the doorway to occult development, and the purification begins with the physical body and the lower mind. The process is, therefore, a double one—physical and mental. The physical relates to the reconstruction of the visible body—to slowly but surely changing *the character of the matter* that composes it. It is one of the simple and well-known facts of physiology that the matter constituting the physical body is continually changing. Like any other machine the body wears out. Its tissues are constantly giving way even when the body is in a state of rest. Were this waste not made good from the food and drink taken into the body it would, of course, speedily perish.

In some parts of the body as, for example, the hair and the nails, the rapidity of the change is easily observed. In others it is very slow. But within a certain period *all* the matter of the physical body wears out, passes away and is replaced by new material. What that time is has not been definitely determined. A generation ago it was placed by some physiologists at seven years, but later observation and study of the subject has greatly shortened the estimated period. While physiologists may not be able to agree in estimates of the time, there is no dispute about the fact itself. But the time required for the transformation is not of great importance. The vital thing is that it occurs and that within a period of a very few years all the physical matter in the visible body of any human being will, imperceptibly but none the less certainly, have been replaced by other physical matter obtained from that person's food and drink.

It is partly because of this truth that Theosophists lay much emphasis upon the importance of pure food and drink. Most of them are vegetarians for two reasons: because of the moral wrong done in destroying the lives of sentient beings and because of the injury done to the physical body through the savage custom of eating flesh. In a consideration of the physical purity of the body we have to deal with the latter question only.

The material of which a body is built determines as certainly whether it is sound and sensitive as the material of which a building is constructed determines its strength and durability. This difference of texture is by no means apparent to the physical senses. Two buildings may look precisely alike on the exterior and yet one may be sound and durable while the other has concealed within its walls structural weakness that dooms it to early collapse. The physical bodies of two persons may differ quite as radically and yet give no outward sign of the fact. One may have a body built only of pure and harmless materials, and capable of responding to superphysical vibrations, without differing outwardly in appearance from one whose body is coarsened with meat and wine.

The student of occultism regards his body as an instrument with which he is to work, knowing that his rise to spiritual illumination and power depends largely upon how pure, sensitive and receptive he can make it. Therefore, he carefully avoids all that will coarsen its fiber and destroy its sensitiveness, placing meat and most classes of food and drink that have been passed through any stage of

fermentation among the rejected articles of diet. In this he merely cooperates with nature in physical purification. He sees to it that only pure material is supplied and of this material nature slowly builds him a *new* physical body. Thus, within a few years, by intelligent use of his knowledge he comes into possession of a body capable of things that could not have been accomplished by the body he previously possessed.

Undoubtedly something can be done even with a poor instrument and we frequently find people with coarse and even repulsive bodies, who are able to exercise clairvoyant faculties. But there are nearly as many degrees of clairvoyance as of intellect and a study of such cases will prove that by no possibility can the term "spiritual illumination" be applied to them. Clairvoyance, in itself, is no more spiritual than eyesight. In the case of the fortune-telling variety of seer it usually indicates possession of psychic tendencies brought over from occult practices of some sort in a previous incarnation and by no means proves that those thus endowed are at a higher stage of evolution than others. Quite the reverse may be true. Dogs and horses often exhibit similar sensitiveness. It is said that at a materializing seance a dog is the first to become aware of a materialization and will growl, or show other signs of seeing, before even the people who are somewhat sensitive are aware of the approach of the materializing entity. Very low types of human beings may be clairvoyant and certain kinds of psychic powers are commonly found among the red Indians and the African Negroes. Such clairvoyance

is connected with the sympathetic nervous system and is extremely limited in its scope and possibilities. At best it can give but fragmentary and uncertain glimpses of superphysical life. But they are often so startling in their mysterious disclosures as to make it appear that the universe is an open book before the seer. A little careful observation, however, soon proves that the apparently all-wise clairvoyant is quite helpless when endeavoring to obtain other information that is comparatively simple.

The clairvoyance that is incidental to spiritual unfoldment is a very different thing indeed. It is "clear seeing," or the gaining of knowledge, through the awakening into activity of certain organs in the brain that lie dormant until the desire for the higher life begins the work of their vivification. This, only, is the clairvoyance that is linked with spirituality and wisdom and which is no more related to the other than thinking is akin to breathing.

The purification essential to the development of soul powers can be hastened greatly by the careful expulsion from the diet of flesh and alcoholic drinks but there is another most important thing requiring attention. This is the purification of the mind. One might live a lifetime on pure and wholesome food, but if his mind were permitted to dwell upon impure thoughts he would be hopelessly shut off from spiritual illumination. Fortunately the mind, like the body, can be manipulated by the self, of which it is quite as much a mere instrument as is the physical mechanism through which it works. We often say that while we can control the speech, and not

utter the thought, we can't help having the thought. This is true if applied to certain kinds of thoughts, especially those arising from the circumstances of the moment, in the minds of those who have never attempted to control their mental processes. But it is not at all true of those thoughts which are largely the result of desire—thoughts that can be welcomed and entertained in the mind as agreeable guests, or which we can decline to recognize and refuse to harbor, by simply resolving to fully occupy the mind with pure and useful thoughts, and thus leave no place for the undersirable sort. The great majority of our thoughts are the result of feeling, of desire, and grow out of our desire attitude toward people and things. Thoughts of jealousy, lust, gluttony, avarice, etc., have desire as their life and inspiration. The miser, the glutton and the libertine are what they are because of uncontrolled desire and they differ from each other only in the object of the desire. The desire may be almost unconsciously possessed, as it doubtless is with many people who eat too much; or it may be a strong desire constantly vivified by thinking and planning to possess more, as in the case of the miser; but it is the desire that produces the result, whatever may be its degree of intensity. That which we really desire the mind naturally turns to and dwells upon, and the inevitable result is that sooner or later we come into contact with the object of the desire and suffer for it, or profit by it, as the case may be. The right thought and desire leads onward to the acquisition of soul powers through which we become masterful and free, while the wrong thoughts and desires chain

us still more securely to that mode of life in which we appear to be the helpless and unhappy victims of senseless chance.

But which are right and which wrong desires, and what are pure and what impure thoughts? In the spiritual sense any mental activity that coarsens and hardens and tends toward the strengthening of the lower nature may properly be called impure. The desire thoughts of the miser are as destructive of spirituality as those of the glutton. Each is fatal to the higher life but in a different way and the mental and moral purification we are considering must be accomplished by gaining freedom from them. The only method of escaping them is by fixing the mind upon loftier things and turning the attention to useful and unselfish activities. This is the process of the purification that is more vitally important than purifying the physical body, essential as that unquestionably is. This does not, of course, mean that we must be without desire but only that we shall not be helpless slaves of desire.

So a most important step on the upward way toward spiritual illumination and the possession of soul powers is to firmly resolve that the desires and emotions shall come under the control of the will. We must put a check on the too insistent physical desires and impulses and resolutely turn the mind away from them. Nobody will come into possession of any power worth having until he does this. Before we can control anything else we must learn to control ourselves. One plain reason for this, aside from the impossibility of spiritual force working through gross matter, is that whoever has not the

moral strength for self-control would be a dangerous custodian of occult power. Both body and mind must be brought under control, if the soul powers are to be evolved, and both must become instinctively obedient to the higher self. An excellent method of beginning the conquest of the lower nature is to select a certain weakness and endeavor to replace it with strength and balance. A point where almost everybody can begin is with the control of the temper, for there are very few people who do not sometimes become angry. Anger is a disintegrating force injurious to those who generate it. Every time the impulse to give way to anger is checked, we have won a point; we have taken an infant step in conscious evolution, and the work becomes easier.

So it is with the whole list of physical desires, and their unbridled gratification, among which the desire for various stimulants may serve as an illustration. They are all merely tyrannies of the body. Tolerating such appetites and, indeed, gross and violent impulses of any description, constantly builds coarser and still coarser matter into the astral body. Besides the misfortunes this may lead to in this life it will certainly lead to unpleasant experiences in the astral region after death, for if the astral body contains a preponderance of the matter of the lower levels it will detain us there until that coarser matter has been left behind. In other words, if the purification of the body has not been accomplished voluntarily here it may be done painfully there, for dropping the physical body and shifting the consciousness to the astral world does not change our real nature or free us from our desires. Consequent-

ly when the man of strong appetites and impulses reaches the astral world he still has all these desires of his physical life but has no means for their gratification. Now thought and desire work much more vividly and intensely in superphysical than in physical matter and therefore it would have been infinitely wiser had these things been controlled and mastered in this life. Therefore, when we set a watch over our thoughts and desires now, we are doing more than merely beginning the development of new soul powers. We are also saving ourselves future trouble.

In addition to the constant efforts to purify the mind and body perhaps the most important factor in the work of evolving soul powers consists of taking the right attitude toward the problems of our daily life. The feeling that we are the helpless victims of our environment, that we are unable to control circumstances, and, above all, the feeling of resentment toward what the thoughtless regard as unjust suffering—all these states of mind must be put resolutely aside. A truer conception of the facts of nature is essential to success. We must realize that we live in a universe of law, of cause and effect and, therefore, of justice. Nothing can befall us in the long run that is not both just, as the outcome of causes we have created, and necessary as a factor in our future development. No sounder philosophy was ever proclaimed than that which declares the ordinary misfortune to be a blessing in disguise. Each furnishes its lesson and brings its reaction of soul strength, and our attitude toward such a life-event not only indicates to what extent we spiritually

profit by it but also how little we really need to suffer from it in the physical consciousness. To rail against our life troubles is as senseless as it would be for a pupil to hate his teacher because a lesson is assigned and an examination is prepared for him. It is by passing through these difficulties of daily life that we evolve the spiritual nature and every trying situation should be welcomed as an opportunity for gaining strength and balance. Sometimes people thoughtlessly ask why, if God is all-loving as well as all-powerful, He does not abolish hard conditions and give us only an easy life. Perhaps for the same reason that the teacher does not solve the hard problems for the school boy while the latter amuses himself on the playground. For the same reason that if a parent possessed great wealth he would not give his son large sums of money to squander and thus start him on the road to ruin. He would give him the same education and training that he otherwise would, however unpleasant the son might think it at the time and however much he might prefer all the glittering idleness that unlimited wealth could furnish. It is just because the father loves him that he desires to develop his noblest qualities, and he would know that only the stern realities of life could cultivate in him ability, courage and self-reliance. The boy without money, obliged to make his way in the world, to rely upon himself, may not realize the fact, but he is learning invaluable lessons that lead to future success. Most of the strong American characters have struggled upward through hardship—such men as Jackson and Grant who moved in the field of force, and Franklin and Lin-

coln who, in the greater realm of intellect and conscience, gave trend to mighty events in human life.

Poverty and pain are the forge and fire from which comes much of the manhood that challenges our admiration—that combination of heart and brain that lifts mankind to nobler thoughts and higher things. From this forge comes the steel of character that stands every strain in the storm and stress of life; the character that keeps its poise when whirlwinds of passion sweep the race; that can stand alone for conscience sake; that scorns the slanders of the base, braves the threats of selfish power and defies the fury of the mob in its heroic battle for the rights of man. One of our "blessings in disguise" is that adversity in which we learn to suffer and to sympathize, to struggle and achieve.

Of course, poverty and pain are not, in themselves, desirable. They represent conditions above which we should have arisen—above which all of us without a single exception shall finally rise. But until that stage in our development is reached they are a necessary part of the evolutionary machinery and do a useful work. When a man has lost the last vestige of selfish desire there can be no more poverty for him; and when he has fully comprehended the unity of all that lives, pain can no longer afflict him.

Power and responsibility naturally go together. To acquire the one necessarily means to assume the other. Power that is not balanced by a sense of responsibility is dangerous both to the possessor and to others. It is much better not to evolve the

soul powers than to misuse them, for such a course would, under the law of karma, entail the most unfortunate results. Therefore every student of occult development should be much more anxious to be useful than to be powerful. Unless he would possess power to be used in the helping of others he would a thousand times better remain in ignorance of its possibilities. He must look well to the motives that prompt him, for in this lies his safety. Whoever would rapidly evolve the inner power must not shrink from the responsibility that goes with it or hesitate to pay the price that nature demands for it—the responsibility of using it beneficently, and the price of sacrificing selfish interests to the common welfare. Until the aspirant can feel that this is not for himself but for others, not to enable him to dominate but to serve, he is not ready to enter upon the way that leads to spiritual enlightenment; and his efforts, instead of bringing success, will be but as the beating of the air. Sincerity, compassion for the unfortunate, and unselfish devotion to the welfare of others, can alone guide him safely and surely in the right direction and bring to him, in good season, the success he will earn.

To become masterful is the work before all who would thus evolve the soul powers and know their incalculable possibilities. It is not an easy thing to do. It means the exercise of such persistence as is rarely encountered. It means the slow but sure creation from within of a dauntless courage that is one of the proofs of man's divinity. It means the evolution of an inner confidence that no failures can shake and a self-reliance that no multiplied ad-

versities can destroy. It is a heroic work that requires a serene and reasoning faith in the justice of the universe, and it ultimately leads the aspirant into a more joyous life than he otherwise can possibly know.

Self Development and Power

It is the natural right of every human being to be happy—to escape the miseries of life. Happiness is the normal condition, as natural as the landscapes and the seasons. It is unnatural to suffer and it is only because of our ignorance that we do suffer. Happiness is the product of wisdom. To attain perfect wisdom, to comprehend fully the purpose of life, to realize completely the relationship of human beings to each other, is to put an end to all suffering, to escape every ill and evil that afflicts us. Perfect wisdom is unshadowed joy.

Why do we suffer in life? Because in the scheme of nature we are being forced forward in evolution and we lack the spiritual illumination that alone can light the way and enable us to move safely among the obstacles that lie before us. Usually we do not even see or suspect the presence of trouble until it suddenly leaps upon us like a concealed tiger. One day our family circle is complete and happy. A week later Death has come and gone and joy is replaced with agony. Today we have a friend. Tomorrow he will be an enemy and we do not know why. A little while ago we had wealth and all ma-

terial luxuries. There was a sudden change and now we have only poverty and misery and yet we seek in vain for a reason why this should be. There was a time when we had health and strength; but they have both departed and no trace of a reason appears. Aside from these greater tragedies of life innumerable things of lesser consequence continually bring to us little miseries and minor heartaches. We most earnestly desire to avoid them but we never see them until they strike us, until in the darkness of our ignorance we blunder upon them. The thing we lack is the spiritual illumination that will enable us to look far and wide, finding the hidden causes of human suffering and revealing the method by which they may be avoided; and if we can but reach illumination the evolutionary journey can be made both comfortably and swiftly. It is as though we must pass through a long, dark room filled with furniture promiscuously scattered about. In the darkness our progress would be slow and painful and our bruises many. But if we could press a button that would turn on the electric light we could then make the same journey quickly and with perfect safety and comfort.

The old method of education was to store the mind with as many facts, or supposed facts, as could be accumulated and to give a certain exterior polish to the personality. The theory was that when a man was born he was a completed human being and that all that could be done for him was to load him up with information that would be used with more or less skill, according to the native ability he happened to be born with. The theosophical idea is that

the physical man, and all that constitutes his life in the physical world, is but a very partial expression of the self; that in the ego of each there is practically unlimited power and wisdom; that these may be brought through into expression in the physical world as the physical body and its invisible counterparts, which together constitute the complex vehicle of the ego's manifestation, are evolved and adapted to the purpose; and that in exact proportion that conscious effort is given to such self-development will spiritual illumination be achieved and wisdom attained. Thus the light that leads to happiness is kindled from within and the evolutionary journey that all are making may be robbed of its suffering.

Why does death bring misery? Chiefly because it separates us from those we love. But when we have evolved the faculty of clairvoyance, in our work of self-development, the separation vanishes and our "dead" friends are as much with us as the living. The only other reason why death brings grief or fear is that we do not understand it and comprehend the part it plays in human evolution. But the moment our ignorance gives way to comprehension such fear vanishes and a serene happiness takes its place.

Why do we have enemies from whose words or acts we suffer? Because in our limited physical consciousness we do not perceive the unity of all life and realize that our wrong thinking and doing must react upon us through other people—a situation from which there is no possible escape except through ceasing to think wrongly and then patiently awaiting the time when the causes we have already

generated are fully exhausted. When spiritual illumination comes, and we no longer stumble in the night of ignorance, the last enemy will disappear and we shall make no more forever.

Why do people suffer from poverty and disease? Only because of our blundering ignorance that makes their existence possible for us, and because we do not comprehend their meaning and their lessons, nor know the attitude to assume toward them. Had we but the wisdom to understand why they come to people, why they are necessary factors in their evolution, they would trouble us no longer. When nature's lesson is fully learned these mute teachers will vanish.

And so it is with all forms of suffering we experience. They are at once reactions from our ignorant blunderings and instructors that point out the better way. When we have comprehended the lessons they teach they are no longer necessary and disappear.

Thus our evolution is going forward and has gone forward in the past. We know that the human race has passed through a long evolution during which it has acquired five senses by which knowledge is gained. Nobody who has given thought to the subject will make the mistake of supposing that this evolution is completed and that the five senses are all we shall ever possess.

In this long evolutionary journey the next thing we shall do is to develop a sixth sense. Some people have already done so and all are approaching it. This dawning sense is called clairvoyance. Fair investigation will show that the clairvoyant possesses certain powers not common to the majority of peo-

ple. This is merely the beginning of the development of the sixth sense, and probably with the majority of clairvoyants it goes no further than etheric and lower astral sight. In other words, they are able to raise the consciousness only to a grade of matter a little beyond the grasp of ordinary vision, while the properly developed, trained clairvoyant raises his consciousness two full planes beyond.

The higher the consciousness is raised the further the horizon of knowledge extends and the clairvoyant is able to hand down information that appears quite miraculous; but it is perfectly natural. If a certain person were born blind and had never understood any more about eyesight than most people understand about clairvoyance; if this person could know how many doorways were in a large building only by groping along with his hands and thus acquiring the knowledge by touch, and another person who could see should glance along the block and instantly tell the blind man the correct number, that would be to the blind man a miracle. Now, when a clairvoyant sees things at a distance where the physical eye cannot reach he really does nothing more remarkable. When we see a thing we receive the vibrations caused by light. That gives the information. When the clairvoyant "sees" at a distance through what we mistakenly call solid substances he receives vibrations of matter so fine that it interpenetrates solids as the ether does.

There are, however, two distinct types of clairvoyance and the difference between them should be clearly comprehended by one who would cooperate with nature in hastening his evolutionary develop-

ment. Another point which should be strongly emphasized is that clairvoyance, of itself, has no necessary relation to spirituality. The higher type of clairvoyance is a result of spiritual development, not its cause. The lower type is not the slightest evidence that its possessor has attained the spiritual life. Clairvoyance may be, and sometimes is, possessed by the most ignorant and immoral. The student of the occult should thoroughly understand these two types of clairvoyance and just what they signify. To that end a brief discussion of races is necessary. Physical science classifies humanity by the superficial distinction of color. Occult science has a wholly different method. It classifies by the inner development. Its "root races" are great divisions, or classes, of humanity that have attained various stages of evolutionary development. Human beings are at various stages of progress, very much as pupils in a school are. A school has various "grades" or "forms." These grades are merely fixed points in the educational journey through the school and the pupils pass up through the grades. In the same sense the "root races" are fixed points in the evolutionary journey and the souls pass up through them from the third root race to the fourth root race and into the fifth. As each grade in the school has its special part of the educational work to do so each race has its particular portion of evolutionary development to pass through. The fifth root race to which the vast majority in the Occident belongs has intellect as its dominant note and our work is to bring mentality to its highest development. A very long time ago we, of the fifth race, were in the fourth

root race, the dominant note of which was emotion. The work in that race was to organize and develop the astral or emotional body. The sixth root race, which has not yet appeared upon the scene, will have still higher characteristics—spirituality, intuition, unity, brotherhood.

The lower type of clairvoyance above referred to is related to the emotional body and is expressed through the sympathetic nervous system, the center of which is the solar plexus. It is a fourth race characteristic. The higher type of clairvoyance belongs to the sixth root race and is expressed through the cerebro-spinal system. It will be seen therefore that these two types of clairvoyance are two full root races apart and that while the higher type is ahead of us, the fifth root race, the lower type lies behind us—thousands upon thousands of years behind us in the evolutionary journey. The higher type is something the race is yet to have and which a very few already have, while the lower type is something the fifth race has passed through and left behind. From the point in the evolutionary development of the race where the sympathetic nervous system clairvoyance was common we have risen to the point where intellect should, and has, overshadowed it; but some have not yet progressed to the point where intellect is the dominant thing. They are reaching a hand backward, so to speak, into the past. While they have risen to the fifth root race level they are still clinging to the fourth root race characteristics. The emotional body and the sympathetic nervous system are still a dominating factor

in their lives. These are the clairvoyants of the fortune telling variety.

It is, therefore, an utterly false assumption that merely because a person is clairvoyant he is further advanced in evolution than one who is not. The truth may be just the reverse—one who has no trace of fourth race clairvoyance may be far ahead of another who possesses it. The higher clairvoyance, however, is quite another matter. It belongs naturally to the sixth root race and its possession indicates a high order of spiritual attainment. The very few people who now do have it are foreshadowing the coming of the next higher race.

Both types of clairvoyance are natural and inevitable at that point in evolution where they appear. They are concomitants of a certain stage of evolution; and one of the facts that the student of self-development should firmly fix in his mind is that even the higher type of clairvoyance is not a magic key that opens the door to spirituality, but that it is the natural result of living the spiritual life. It is not the cause of exalted virtues but naturally follows their development. It is, therefore, folly to long for such clairvoyance and to waste time and energy to develop it. One of the highest spiritual authorities says:

"Have no desire for psychic powers; they will come when the Master knows that it is best for you to have them. To force them too soon often brings in its train much trouble; often their possessor is misled by deceitful nature-spirits, or becomes conceited and thinks he cannot make a mistake; and in any case the time and strength that it takes to

gain them might be spent in work for others. They will come in the course of development—they *must* come."

Every human being must make, and is making, this long evolutionary journey from spiritual infancy to godlike power and perfection, but there are two ways in which it may be done. We may, as the vast majority do, accept the process of unconscious evolution and submit to nature's whip and spur that continuously urge the thoughtless and indifferent forward until they finally reach the goal. Or, we may choose conscious evolution and work intelligently with nature, thus making progress that is comparatively of enormous rapidity and at the same time avoid much of what Hamlet called the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

The degree to which mind can control circumstances and dominate matter is far greater than is generally believed. Our impressions about matter are very illusory. No form of matter is permanent. Change goes on everywhere at every instant, by physical laws in the physical body and by astral and mental laws in our invisible bodies. We are not the same beings, physically, mentally or spiritually, any two days in succession. The very soul itself is subject to this law of change. It may expand and shine out through the physical organism resplendent, or it may only faintly glimmer through a constantly coarsening body.

What is the law of soul growth? Through adherence to what principle may we reach spiritual illumination? There are certain well established facts about the laws of growth that we should not

overlook when seeking the way forward. Nothing whatever can grow without use, without activity. Inaction causes atrophy. Physiologists tell us that if the arm be tied to the body so that it cannot be used it will in time become so enfeebled that it is of no further service. It will wither away. That is nature's law of economy. She never gives life where it is useless, where it cannot, or will not, be utilized. On the other hand, exercise increases power. To increase the size and strength of muscles we must use them. This is just as true of mental and moral faculties as it is of the physical body. The only way to make the mind keen and powerful is to exercise it by original thinking. One way to gain soul powers is to give free play to the loftiest aspirations of which we are capable, and to do it systematically instead of at random. We grow to be like the thing we think about. Now, the reverse of all this must be equally true. To give no thought to higher things, to become completely absorbed in material affairs, is to stifle the soul, to invite spiritual atrophy.

Turning our attention to nature we shall find in parasite life convincing proof of all this. To refuse or neglect to use an organ or faculty results in being deprived of it. The dodder, says Drummond, has roots like other plants, but when it fixes sucker discs on the branches of neighboring plants and begins to get its food through them, its roots perish. When it fails to use them it loses them. He also points to the hermit-crab as an illustration of this great fact in nature, that disuse means loss, and that to shirk responsibility is the road to degeneration.

The hermit-crab was once equipped with a hard shell and with as good means of locomotion as other crabs. But instead of courageously following the hardy life of other crustaceans it formed the bad habit of taking up its residence in the cast-off shells of mollusks. This made life easy and indolent. But it paid the price of all shirking. In time it lost four legs, while the shell over the vital portion of its body degenerated to a thin membrane which leaves it practically helpless when it is out of its captured home. And this is the certain result of all shirking of responsibility. There may be an apparent temporary gain, but it always means greater loss, either immediate or remote. So nature punishes inaction with atrophy. Whatever is not used finally ceases to be. In plain language, apathy, inaction, idleness, uselessness, is the road to degeneration. On the other hand, aspiration and activity mean growth, development, power.

So we grow, physically, mentally and morally, by activity, by exercise of the things, of the faculties we desire to possess. It is only by the constant exercise of these things that we can grow at all. When this great law of nature is understood we see at once how it is that life is full of trouble; why it is that the whole visible world seems to be designed to keep us constantly at work physically and mentally, to challenge our resourcefulness in improving our physical, social and political conditions, to continually try our patience and to forever test our courage. It is the way of development. It is the price of progress.

The universe is a training school for evolving in-

telligence—a vast gymnasium for the development of moral fiber. We become mentally clever by playing at the game of life. We match our courage against its adversities and acquire fearlessness. We try our optimism against its disappointments and learn cheerfulness. We pit our patience against its failures and gain persistence. We are torn from the pinnacle of ambition by opponents and learn toleration of others. We fall from the heights of vanity and pride, and learn to be modest and humble. We encounter pain and sorrow and learn sympathy with suffering. It is only by such experiences that we can grow to rounded measure. It is only in an environment thus adapted to our spiritual development that we can evolve the latent powers within us.

Such is the universe in which we find ourselves and from which there is no escape. No man can avoid life—not even the foolish one who, when the difficulties before him appear for the moment overwhelming, tries to escape them by suicide. A man cannot die. He can only choose how he will live. He may either helplessly drift through the world suffering from all the ills and evils that make so many unhappy or he may choose the method of conscious evolution that alone makes life truly successful. We may be either the suffering slaves of nature or the happy masters of her laws.

Now, all powers possessed by any human being, no matter how exalted his position in evolution, or how sublime his spiritual power, are latent in all human beings and can, in time, be developed and brought into action. Of course there is no magic

rule by which the ignoramus can instantly become wise or by which a brutal man can be at once transformed into a saint. It may require scores of incarnations to accomplish a work so great, but when a man reaches the point in his evolution where he begins to comprehend the purpose of life, and to evolve the will to put forth his energies in cooperation with nature, his rise to wisdom and power may be swift indeed. But this transformation from the darkness of ignorance to spiritual illumination, from helplessness "in the fell clutch of circumstance" to power over nature, must be brought about by his own efforts, for it is a process of evolution—of forcing the latent to become the active. Therefore one must resolve to take oneself in hand for definite and systematic self-development. Nobody else can do the work for us. Certain moral qualities must be gained before there can be spiritual illumination and genuine wisdom, and such qualities, or virtues, have to be evolved by the laws under which all growth occurs. It is just as impossible to acquire a moral quality by reading about its desirability as to evolve muscular strength by watching the performance of a group of athletes. To gain muscular strength one must take part in the physical activities that produce it. He must live the athletic life. To win spiritual strength and supremacy he must live the spiritual life. There is no other way. He must first learn what mental and moral qualities are essential, and how to gain them, and then set earnestly about the work of acquiring them.

The first thing necessary is to get a clear understanding of the fact that the physical body is not

the self but only a vehicle or instrument through which the self is being manifested in the visible world. The body is as much your instrument as the hand is, or as your pen is. It is a thing which you, the self, use and a clear conception of this fact—a feeling that this is the fact—is the first step toward that absolute control of the physical body that lays the foundation for success in conscious evolution. When we feel that in managing the physical body we are controlling something that is not ourself we are fairly started on the right road.

There are three things that a person must possess to be successful in self-development. If he has not these three qualifications he will make but little progress; but, fortunately, any lacking quality can be evolved and if one does not possess these three necessities his first work is to create them. These three things are an ardent desire, an iron will and an alert intelligence. Why are these three qualifications essential to success and what purpose do they serve?

Desire is nature's motor power—the propulsive force that pushes everything forward in its evolution. It is desire that stimulates to action. Desire drives the animal into the activities that evolve its physical body and sharpen its intelligence. If it had no desire it would lie inert and perish. But the desire for food, for drink, for association with its kind, impels it to action, and the result is the evolution of strength, skill and intelligence in proportion to the intensity of its desires. To gratify these desires it will accept battle no matter how great may be the risk and will unhesitatingly stake life itself

in the combat. Desire not only induces the activity that develops physical strength and beauty, but also has its finer effects. Hunger compels the animal not only to seek food, but to pit its cunning against that of its prey. Driven forward by desire it develops, among other qualities, strength, courage, patience, endurance, intelligence.

Desire plays the same role with man at his higher stage of evolution. It stimulates him to action; and always as his activity satisfies his original desire a new one replaces the old and lures him on to renewed exertion. The average young man beginning his business career, desires only a comfortable cottage. But when that is attained he wants a mansion. He soon tires of the mansion and wants a palace. Then he wants several—at the seaside, in the city, and on the mountains. At first he is satisfied with a bicycle; then he demands an automobile, and finally a steam yacht. He sets out as a youth to earn a livelihood and welcomes a small salary. But the desire for money pushes him into business for himself and he works tirelessly for a competence. He feels that a small fortune should satisfy anybody but when he gets it he wants to be a millionaire. If he succeeds in that he then desires to become a multimillionaire.

Whether the desire is for wealth, or for fame, or for power, the same result follows—when the desire is satisfied a greater one takes its place and spurs the ambitious one to still further exertion. He grasps the prize he believes to contain complete satisfaction only to discover that while he was pursuing it desire had grown beyond it, and so the

goal he would attain is always far ahead of him. Thus are we tricked and apparently mocked by nature until we finally awaken to the fact that all the objects of desire—the fine raiment, the jewels, the palaces, the wealth, the power, are but vain and empty things; and that the real reward for all our efforts to secure them is not these objects at all *but the new powers we have evolved in getting them;* powers that we did not before possess and which we should not have evolved but for nature's great propulsive force—desire. The man who accumulates a fortune by many years of persistent effort in organizing and developing a business enterprise, by careful planning and deep thinking may naturally enough look upon the fortune he will possess for a few years before it passes on to others, as his reward. But the truth is that it is a very transient and perishable and worthless thing compared to the new powers that were unconsciously evolved in getting it—powers that will be retained by the man and be brought into use in future incarnations.

Nature's reward consists of the new character qualities he has evolved in his activities—his courage in facing reverses, his diplomacy in dealing with people, his skill in managing difficult situations, his patience, his integrity, his persistence. All these virtues he has been building into his character and they are the real reward. The material evidence of his success will perish but these character qualities he will take with him when he passes to the life beyond. He will bring them back with him in future lives and they will be his eternal possessions.

Desire, then, plays a most important role in

human evolution. It awakens, stimulates, propels. What wind is to the ship, what steam is to the locomotive, desire is to the human being.

Some teachers insist that we shall "kill out desire." Perhaps for the average mortal "kill out desire" might be interpreted "transmute desire." Without desire of any kind farther progress would be impossible. But by transmuting the lower desires into the higher he moves steadily forward and upward without losing the motive power that urges him forever onward.

To transmute desire to continually replace the lower with the higher, really is killing desire out but it is doing it by the slow and safe evolutionary process. As to crushing it suddenly, that is simply impossible; but substitution may work wonders. Suppose, for example, that a young man is a gambler and his parents are much distressed about it. The common and foolish course is to lecture him on the sin of gambling and to tearfully urge him to associate only with very proper young men. But the young gambler is not in the least interested in that sort of a life, which appears to him to be a kind of living death, and such entreaty does not move him. His parents would do better by looking more closely into the case. Why is he a gambler? He desires money. He seeks excitement. He wants to live in an atmosphere of intense life and activity. Very well. These desires are not wrong in themselves. It is useless to try to crush them. It is nonsense to argue that he does not want these things. Clearly enough he does want them and that is precisely why he gambles. Then do not attempt the impossibility

of killing the desire but change the objects of his desires. Say to him: "You desire money and a life full of turbulence and excitement. Well, you can get all that in a better and a legitimate way and have the respect of your friends besides. You can go into politics. That is a field within the pale of the law and in it you can have scope for all the energy and activity and intensity of life you long for, with all the element of chance which you find so attractive." And when the young man has had his fling there and tires of it then something else can be attempted. To try to crush desire and curb the outrushing life of youth is both foolish and impossible. We can only direct it.

There are, of course, certain gross desires that must be gotten rid of by the most direct and least objectionable method, and when one really desires to be free from a given vice or moral weakness and sets earnestly and intelligently about it his release is not so difficult as the complete tyranny of most vices would lead one to suppose. There is a process by which any of us may be free if we will take the trouble to patiently put it into practice. This method will apply to any desire from which we wish to be released. For example, let us take the person who has a settled desire for alcoholic stimulants but really wishes to be rid of it forever. Many people who are thus afflicted to the point where they occasionally become intoxicated feel, when they recover their normal condition, that no price would be too great to pay for freedom from this humiliating habit. As a rule such a man tries to close his eyes to his shame and forget it, promising himself that he will be

stronger when the temptation again assails him. But it is just this putting it aside, this casting it out of his mind, that perpetuates his weakness. He instinctively shrinks from dwelling upon the thought of whither he is drifting. So he puts the unpleasant subject aside altogether and when the inner desire asserts itself again he finds himself precisely as helpless as before.

Now, his certain method of escape from this tyranny of desire is to turn his mind resolutely to an examination of the whole question. Let him look the facts in the face, however humiliating they may be. He should call his imagination to his assistance. It should be used to picture to himself his future if he does not succeed in breaking up the unfortunate slavery of the desire nature. He should think of the fact that as he grows older the situation grows worse. He should realize that he will become a helpless, repulsive sot, with feeble body and weakening mind, and reflect upon the humiliation he must endure, the poverty he must face, and the physical and mental pain he must bear in the future if he now fails to break the desire ties that bind him. This creates in him a feeling of repulsion toward the cause of it all; and if he continues to think of what he is slowly drifting toward—if he daily regards it all with a feeling of slight repulsion —then even within a month or two he will find that his desire for drink is slowly fading out.

This is as true of all other desires that enslave us. The desire for alcoholic stimulants merely illustrates the principle involved. Any desire from which one wishes to be free may be escaped by the

same method. But one who would free himself from the desire nature should not make the mistake of creating a feeling of intense hostility toward the thing he seeks to escape; for hatred is also a tie. He should merely reach a position of complete indifference. He should think of it not with settled hostility, but with slight repulsion; and if he does that daily, mentally dwelling upon the pain and humiliation it causes, he will find the ties loosening, the desire weakening.

Desire is a force that may be beneficial or detrimental, according to its use. As we may eradicate a desire so may we create a desire. How, then, may one who seeks the highest self-development use desire, this propulsive force of nature, to help himself forward? He should desire spiritual strength most earnestly, for without such desire he cannot succeed. Therefore if the aspirant does not have the ardent desire for spiritual illumination he must create it. To accomplish this let him again call imagination to his assistance. Let him picture himself as having his power for usefulness many times multiplied by moral development. He should think of himself as possessing the intuition that enables him to understand the difficulties of others and to comprehend their sorrows. He should daily think of the fact that this would so broaden and quicken his sympathies that he would be enormously more useful in the world than he can now possibly be and that he could become a source of happiness to thousands. Let him reflect that as he gets farther along in occult development and in unselfishness and spirituality he may have the inestimable privilege

of coming into contact with some of the exalted intelligences that watch over and assist the struggling aspirants on their upward way. He should daily recall the fact that he is now moving forward toward a freer, richer, more joyous life than he has yet known and that every effort brings him nearer to its realization. Thus dwelling on the subject in its various aspects he creates the ardent desire that serves to propel him forward.

The second requisite is a firm will. It should not be forgotten that an unusual and difficult thing is being attempted in which a person of weak will cannot possibly hope to succeed. Even in the ordinary life of the world considerable will power is essential to success. To succeed in business, to become expert in a profession, or to completely master an art, requires strong will, determination, perseverance. The difficulties in occult development are still greater and, while it is true that any degree of effort is well worth while, the weaklings will not go far. Only those with the indomitable will that knows neither surrender nor compromise may hope for a large measure of success. Once the will is thoroughly aroused and brought into action, every hindrance in the way will be swept aside.

"The human will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless soul,
Can hew a way to any goal
Tho' walls of granite intervene.

* * * *

Be not impatient of delay,
But wait as one who understands.
When spirit rises and commands
The gods are ready to obey."

Mighty, indeed, is this force when aroused. But a person may be easily deceived about his will. He is likely to think that his will is much stronger than it really is. He may feel assured of his strength and tenacity but that is no guarantee that after a few months of monotonous work he may not abandon it unless he adopts the wise plan of strengthening his will as he moves forward. Let him begin this by testing his present strength of will, but let him not be discouraged by the result. He should remember that whatever he lacks in will power he can evolve by proper effort.

To find out whether he really has much strength of will a person may begin to observe to what extent he permits his daily plans to be modified, or entirely changed, by the things that run counter to his will. Does he hold steadfastly to his purpose or does he weakly surrender to small obstacles? Has he the will power to even begin the day as he has planned it? The evening before he decides that he will rise at six o'clock the next morning. He knows there are certain excellent reasons why he should do so and he retires with the matter fully decided. It is positively settled that at exactly six o'clock the day's program shall begin. But when the clock strikes that hour the next morning he feels strongly disinclined to obey the summons. It involves some bodily discomfort to rise at that moment and he concludes that, after all, perhaps he was a bit hasty the evening before in fixing upon that hour! Whereupon he reconsiders the matter and makes it seven; and when that time arrives he generously extends it to eight o'clock. The hour, of course, is unim-

portant. But whatever may have been the hour that was previously determined upon, the keeping of that determination is of the greatest importance and the failure to put the resolution into effect is evidence of the possession of a weak will. This proves that such a man has very little real will power, for he permits the desire for trifling bodily comfort to set his plans aside. Such persons are still slaves to the physical body and weakly permit it to upset carefully outlined programs. They are not yet ready for good work in occult development, where real success can come only to those who have steadfast strength of purpose.

People who fail to assert the will and bring the body into complete subjection probably little realize what a price they pay for a trifling physical pleasure; for until they voluntarily take the right course they have not escaped the evolutionary necessity of compulsion and may reasonably expect sooner or later to be thrown into an environment that will apply the stimulus they still need to arouse the will. It may be unpleasant while it is occurring, but what better fortune could befall an indolent man than to find himself in circumstances where his poverty or other necessity compels him to subordinate bodily comfort to the reign of the will? Nature provides the lessons we require. We may wisely cooperate with her and thus escape the sting; but so long as we need the lesson we may be quite sure that it awaits us.

All the business activities of the world are developing the will. Through them will and desire work together in evolving latent powers. Desire

arouses will power. A man desires wealth and the desire plunges him into business activities and stimulates the will by which he overcomes all the difficulties that lie in his way. Ardent desire for an education arouses the will of the student and the awakened will triumphs over poverty and all other barriers between him and the coveted diploma. If a man stands at a lower point in evolution where he has not the ambition for intellectual culture nor for fame nor for wealth, but only the desire for shelter and food, still that primitive desire forces him into action; and while his will power will be evolved only in proportion to the strength of the desire that prompts him, it must nevertheless grow. Instead of rising at a certain hour because the will decrees it he may rise only because he knows his livelihood depends upon it. But he is learning the same lesson —the overcoming of the inertia of the physical body —albeit it is compulsory instead of voluntary. But all this is unconscious evolution. It is the long, slow, painful process. It is the only way possible for those who are not wise enough to cooperate with nature in her evolutionary work and thus rise above the necessity of compulsion.

How, then, may we develop the will when it is so weak that we are still slaves of nature instead of the masters of destiny? Will power, like any other faculty, may be cultivated and made strong. To do this one may plan in advance what he will do under certain circumstances and then carry out the program without evasion or hesitation when the time arrives. His forethought will enable him to do this if he does not undertake things too difficult

at first. Let him resolve to do at a certain hour some small thing which, in the ordinary course of his duties, he sees is necessary but unpleasant; and then firmly resolve in advance that exactly at the appointed time he will do it. Thus fortified before the trial comes he will probably go successfully through with it. After once deciding upon the time there should be no postponement and not an instant's delay when the moment arrives.

The will power can also be used to acquire alertness; and it is in the degree that we are alert that we get the lessons of life. What a difference there is in that respect between people! It was said of Charles Dickens that he would walk along a London street and when he had finished his journey he had seen everybody on both sides of the street and had observed their various moods, so alert to life was he. Another man may make the same journey wrapped in a brown study and when he has reached his destination he will not know how he arrived nor perhaps why he is there!

One of the things we have to learn is to overcome the inertia of the physical body and many people are not really awake on the physical plane because they have not done so. To a certain extent they are "dead" within the physical body, for it is a condition much nearer death than that supposed death of one who no longer has the physical body. The inert mass of physical matter in which such people are functioning leaves them only half alive until they have aroused themselves from its domination. They remind one of the lines:

"Life is a mystery, death is a doubt,
And some folks are dead
While they're walking about!"

This inertia of the physical body that so often renders people nearly useless is very largely a matter of habit and can be overcome to a surprising degree by simply using a little will power. Everybody is familiar with the fact that it is sometimes much easier to think and act than at other times. But perhaps it is not so well known that the dull periods can invariably be overcome by an effort of the will and the physical body be made to do its proper work. An actor or lecturer after months of continuous work may find the brain and body growing tired and dull. He may feel when going before his audience that he has not an idea nor the wit to express it were someone else to furnish it. Yet by an effort of the will he can quickly overcome the condition and change from stupidity to mental alertness and intensity of thought. The self is never tired. It is only the physical body that grows weary. It is true that it has its limitations and must not be overtaxed and driven beyond endurance as a tired horse is sometimes cruelly urged forward with whip and spur. Judgment must always be used in determining one's capacity for work; but that which is to be done should never be done draggingly, with the inertia of the physical body marring the work. We should be fully awake instead of "dead" while we "are walking about." If a person resolves to be the master of the body he may soon acquire the power to arouse it to activity and alertness during all his waking hours, very much as one may acquire

the habit of keen observation and be conscious of what is occurring in his vicinity instead of being carelessly unconscious of the major portion of what is going on immediately about him.

This matter of giving attention to the things that may properly engage the mind, and of using the will to arouse and control it, is of very great importance. Is it not what we call "paying attention" that makes the connection between the ego and the objective world? Giving attention is a process of consciousness. The person who fails in attention misses the purpose of life and throws away valuable time and opportunity. To give attention is to be alive and awake and in a condition to make the most of limited physical life. Yet many people cannot give sustained attention to an ordinary conversation nor direct the mind with sufficient precision to state a simple fact without wandering aimlessly about in the effort, bringing in various incidental matters until the original subject, instead of being made clear, is obscured in a maze of unimportant details or lost sight of altogether.

Such habits of mind should be put resolutely aside by one who would hasten self-development. The attention should be fixed deliberately upon the subject in hand, whatever it may be, and nothing should be permitted to break the connection between that and the mind. Whether it is a conversation or a book, or a problem being silently worked out intellectually, it should have undivided attention until the mind is ready for something else.

Perhaps few of us give to any subject the close attention which alone can prove its own effective-

ness and demonstrate the fact that there goes with such steadily sustained attention a subtle power of extended, of accentuated, consciousness. When ten minutes is given to a certain subject and other thoughts are constantly intruding, so that when the ten minutes have passed only five minutes have actually been devoted to the subject, the result is by no means a half of what would have been accomplished had the whole of the ten minutes been given to uninterrupted attention. The time thus spent in wavering attention is practically without effect. The connection between mind and subject has not been complete. Mind and subject were, so to say, out of focus. Attention must be sustained to the point where it becomes concentration. The mind must be used as a sun-glass can be used. Hold the glass between sun and paper, out of focus, for an hour and nothing will happen. A yellow circle of light falls on the paper and that is all. But bring it into perfect focus, concentrating the rays to the finest possible point, and the paper turns brown and finally bursts into the fire that will consume it. They are the same rays that were previously ineffective. Concentration produced results.

The mind must be brought under such complete control of the will that it can be manipulated like a search-light, turned in this direction or that, or flung full upon some obscure subject and held steadily there till it illuminates every detail of it, as the search-light sends a dazzling ray through space and shows every rock and tree on a hillside far away through the darkness of the night.

The third necessity is keen intelligence. The force

of desire, directed by the will, must be supplemented by an intelligent mind. There is a popular notion that good motives are sufficient in themselves and that when one has the desire to attain spiritual illumination, plus the will to achieve, nothing more is needed but purity of purpose. That is a misconception. It is true that the mystic makes devotion the vital thing in his spiritual growth; and it is also true that the three paths of action, knowledge and devotion blend and become one at a higher stage. But while there are methods of development in which intellect is not at first made a chief factor it can by no means be ignored in the long run; nor are we now considering those methods. A good intellect, therefore, is a necessary part of the equipment.

Good motives play a most important part, indeed, in occult progress. They safeguard the aspirant on his upward way. Without pure motives, without a large measure of unselfishness, the greatest dangers would encompass him. But good motives cannot take the place of good sense and relieve him of the necessity of thinking. He must develop judgment and discrimination. There are things he must know, and he must use his knowledge, or difficulties will follow no matter how noble may be his intentions. Suppose, for illustration, that two men set out upon a dark night to cross a wild and rugged piece of ground—one with bad motives and the other with good. One is going to rob a house and, if need be, to kill anybody who might try to interfere with his plans. His motives are very bad but he has perfect knowledge of the dangerous ground he is to cross and he will therefore travel over it in safety. The other man

has the best of motives. He is going to spend the night with a sick and helpless neighbor; but he has no knowledge of the rough and treacherous ground he must cross in the darkness and his good motives will not insure him against stumbling over the stones or falling into a ditch and breaking an arm. Good motives are not enough. We must know! Progress in occultism is impossible without knowledge.

But how is a keen, alert intelligence to be acquired if we do not possess it? Like any other latent faculty or power it may be evolved. As the physical strength may be steadily increased by constant exercise of the muscles, so mind may increase in power by systematic work. It should be exercised in original thinking. A stated period, if only a quarter of an hour daily, can be set aside for the purpose. A book on a serious subject will furnish material but the too common method of reading, of following the author lazily and accepting whatever he sets forth as a matter of course, is of little value. One must read with discrimination, receiving the ideas offered as a juryman would receive testimony from a witness, considering it from every possible viewpoint, examining it in the light of known facts, turning it over in the mind, weighing it thoughtfully, and accepting or rejecting according to its reasonableness or its lack of reason. In such mental work for intellectual growth each paragraph can be considered by itself and only a small portion of the time should be given to the reading while the remainder is devoted to pondering over what has been read. Of course a specific study is an advantage and nothing is better

than to study occultism, thinking deeply upon the problems of human evolution.

Another method that goes admirably with such work is the close observation and study of all the life in manifestation about us. We should try to comprehend people, to observe and understand them. Every word, act and facial expression has its meaning to be caught and interpreted. All this will not only sharpen the wits but also strengthen human sympathy, for it enables us the better to know the difficulties and sorrows of others. If such practices are followed faithfully day by day the growth will be steady.

Still another useful practice is to exercise the imagination, the art of creating mental pictures with no physical object present. The face of an absent friend can be called up in the mind and reproduced in every detail—the color of the eyes and hair, the various moods and expressions; or one's childhood home can be recalled and the imagination made to reconstruct it. The house being complete the landscape can be reproduced, with the hills, trees and roads. Repeated practice at "seeing mentally" is of the greatest value in occult development.

While the aspirant is thus working to improve the three essential qualifications of desire, will and intelligence—to intensify his desire to possess powers for the helping of others, to strengthen the will in order to acquire such powers, and to steadily improve the intellect—he should also be giving most earnest attention to meditation, for it is through this practice that the most remarkable results may be produced in the transformation of his bodies, visible and in-

visible, through which the ego manifests itself in the physical world. In the degree that these are organized and made sensitive and responsive they cease to be limitations of consciousness. Such sensitiveness and responsiveness may be brought about by meditation, together with proper attention to the purification of the physical and astral bodies; for purity and sensitiveness go together.

Meditation is a subject so very important to the aspirant that specific instructions should guide him. The average person, used to the turbulent life of Occidental civilization, will find it a sufficiently difficult matter to control the mind, and to finally acquire the power to direct it as he desires even with all the conditions in his favor. The serene hours of morning are the most favorable of the twenty-four for meditation. Regularity has a magic of its own and the hour should be the same each morning. To be alone in surroundings as quiet as possible is another essential. The most desirable time for meditation is soon after awakening in the morning. Before turning the mind to any of the business affairs of the day let the aspirant sit calmly down and meditate upon any wholesome thought, like patience, courage or compassion, keeping the mind steadily upon the subject for five minutes.

Two very important things are being accomplished by such meditation. First, we are getting control of the mind and learning to direct it where and how we choose; and, second, we are attracting to and building into the bodies we possess certain grades of imponderable matter that will make thinking and acting along these lines easier and

easier for us until they are established habits and we actually become in daily life patient, courageous and compassionate. Whatever qualities or virtues we desire to possess may be gained through the art of meditation and the effort to live up to the ideal dwelt upon daily by the mind.

While it is absolutely true that any human being can make of himself that which he desires to be—can literally raise himself to any ideal he is capable of conceiving—it must not be supposed that it can be done in a short time and by intermittent effort. We sometimes hear it said that all we need do is to realize that all power is within us, when, presto! we are the thing we would be! It is quite true that we must realize their existence before we can call the latent powers into expression; but the work of arousing the latent into the active is a process of growth, of actual evolutionary change. The physical body, as it is now, is not sensitive enough to respond to subtle vibrations. Its brain is not capable of receiving and registering the delicate vibrations sent outward by the ego, and the task of changing it so that it can do so is not a trifling or easy one. But every effort produces its effect and to the persistent and patient devotee of self-development the final result is certain. But it is not a matter of miraculous accomplishment. It is a process of inner growth. There are, it is quite true, cases in which people who have entered upon this method of self-development have, in a short time, attained spiritual illumination, becoming fully conscious of the invisible world and its inhabitants while awake in the physical body; extending the

horizon of consciousness to include both worlds, and coming into possession of the higher clairvoyance that enables one to trace past causes and modify impending effects. But such people are those who have given so much attention to self-development in past lives that they have now but little more to do in order to come into full possession of occult powers. Sometimes it requires little more than the turning of their attention to the matter. Seriously taking up theosophical studies is sometimes the final step that leads to the opening of the inner sight.

But how can one know to what point he may have advanced in the past and where he now stands? How may we know whether there is but a little work ahead or a great deal? We cannot know; nor is it important to know. The person who should take up the task merely because he thinks there is little to do would certainly fail. The very fact that he would not venture upon the undertaking if he thought the task a difficult one is evidence that he has not the qualifications necessary for the success of the occult student. Unless he is filled with a longing to possess greater power to be used in the service of humanity, and fired with an enthusiasm that would hesitate at no difficulties, he has not yet reached the point in his evolution where he awaits only the final steps that will make him a disciple. But even the absence of the keen desire for spiritual progress, which is the best evidence of the probability of success, should not deter anybody from entering upon the systematic study of Theosophy and devoting to it all the time and energy he can; nor should the thought that many years

might pass without producing any very remarkable results lead him to conclude that the undertaking would not be a profitable one. The time will come for each human being when he will step out of the great throng that drifts with the tide and enter upon the course of conscious evolution, assisting nature instead of ignoring her beneficent plan; and since it is but a question of time the sooner a beginning is made the better, for the sooner will suffering cease.

There should be a word of warning about the folly of trying to reach spiritual illumination by artificial methods. Astral consciousness is sometimes developed by sitting in a "developing circle" and also by a certain regulation of the breathing. For two reasons such methods should be avoided. One is that any powers thus gained cannot be permanent, and the other is that they may be exceedingly dangerous. Many people have made physical wrecks of themselves or have become insane by such methods.

There are those who advertise to quickly teach clairvoyance, for a consideration, as though spiritual powers could really be conferred instead of evolved! It is true that efforts toward the evolution of such powers may be enormously aided by teachers, but such instruction cannot be bought, and the offer to furnish it for money is the best evidence of its worthlessness. Those who teach the ancient wisdom select their own pupils from the mentally and morally fit, and tuition can be paid only in devotion to truth and service to humanity. That is the only road that leads to instruction that is safe and worth having, and until the aspirant is firmly upon

that sound moral ground he is much better off without powers, the selfish use of which would lead to certain disaster.

But how shall the pupil find the teacher? He need not find him, at first, so far as the limited consciousness is concerned. Long before he knows anything of it in his waking hours he may be receiving instruction while he is out of the physical body during the hours of sleep. The teacher finds the pupil long before the pupil suspects that the teacher exists; and since it is the pupil who has the limited consciousness it is quite natural that it should be so. Thus it is inevitable that all who enter upon the way that leads to spiritual illumination may long remain ignorant of the fact that any teachers are interested in them or that anybody is giving the slightest attention to them. Naturally enough one cannot know until the moment arrives when his brain has become sufficiently sensitive to retain a memory of at least a fragment of his superphysical experiences.

But what leads to the selection of the pupil? His earnestness, his unselfishness, his devotion, his spiritual aspirations. There is an old occult maxim to the effect that when the pupil is ready the Master is waiting. They have need of many more than are ready to be taught. Those who lead and enlighten watch eagerly for all who will qualify themselves to enter upon the upward way. Every human being gets exactly what he fits himself to receive. He cannot possibly be overlooked. By his spiritual aspiration each lights the lamp in the window of his soul and to the watchers from the heights that light

against the background of the overwhelming materiality of our times must be as the sun in a cloudless sky.

Other things come later, but these simpler things, to realize the necessity for conscious evolution, to comprehend the method of soul development, to take full control of the mind and the physical body, to resolutely curb the grosser desires and to give free rein to the higher aspirations, are the first infant steps in the self-development that leads to illumination. Then one begins to discover that this very desire for greater spiritual power is generating a force that carries one forward and upward. He finally begins to observe actual progress. The brain becomes clearer, the intellect keener. The sphere of influence grows wider, and friendships become warmer. Aspiration lifts him into a new and radiant life, and the wondrous powers of the soul begin to become a conscious possession. And to this soul growth there is no limit. The aspirant will go on and on in this life and others with an ever-extending horizon of consciousness until he has the mental grasp of a Plato, the vivid imagination of a Dante, the intuitive perception of a Shakespeare. It is not by the outward acquirement of facts that such men become wise and great. It is by developing the soul from within until it illuminates the brain.

And when, through the strife and storm of materiality, he finally reaches the tranquility of the inner peace he shall comprehend the great fact that life really is joy when lived in the possession of spiritual power and in perfect harmony with the laws of the universe. With even these first steps in

occult achievement the aspirant enters upon a higher and more satisfactory life than he has ever known. Literally he becomes a new man. Gradually the old desires and impulses fade away and new and nobler aspirations take their place. He has learned obedience to law only to discover that obedience was the road to conquest. He has risen above the gross and sensuous by the power of conscious evolution; and, looking back upon what he has been, with neither regret nor apology, he comprehends that significant thought of Tennyson: On stepping stones of their dead selves men rise to higher things.

The Inspired Life

To live an ideal life is the instinctive desire of the human being. Every truth of nature that will help him to do it is of very great value to the race and we cannot spend time more wisely than in carefully studying the fundamental principles of our being. We all strive, with some degree of success, to establish a consistent relationship between our ideals and our lives—between precept and practice—but our success must necessarily be largely dependent upon our understanding of our relationship to the source of all life and the method by which its sublimity may become an individual possession.

Within the world of Christian thought and philosophy there are two radically different views of the relationship between God and man. They are equal-

ly orthodox—equally authoritative; and yet profoundly important results depend upon whether we accept and shape our lives by the one or by the other.

One of these views is commonly known as that of God transcendent. The other is known as that of God immanent.

At first thought this may sound like metaphysical abstractions with no relationship to the practical affairs of physical life. But careful consideration will show that they present ideas as opposite as the poles of the earth and that these ideas have profound and far-reaching influence in the world of men.

That view known as transcendence is that God and man are beings apart from each other; that the relationship is that which exists between the inventor and the machine. It is an anthropomorphic view of the Supreme Being and it translates spiritual truths in terms of the literal and the materialistic. It is wide-spread in western civilization and is quite naturally found side by side with that literal interpretation of the Bible that obscures truth and destroys beauty by mistaking allegory for history.

The opposing view is that of God immanent. Immanence differs from transcendence as the clear light of day differs from the baffling shadows of the night. It is the view that the Supreme Being is not apart from His universe but is within it; indeed, that He *is* His universe, and yet more than His universe; for the idea of immanence includes all the sublimity signified by the word "transcendence," while rejecting only the materializing tendency and

limitations with which the dogmatic use of that word has invested it.

Of course it is nearly as impossible to express spiritual truths in physical language as for the finite to comprehend the infinite. All attempts only emphasize our helplessness. In the effort to describe immanence, or in-being, we can only declare that we mean that the universe is an expression of God, an actual emanation, a literal portion, *is* the Supreme Being, but not *all* of the Supreme Being, as hands are part of the body and yet not the body; an emanation even as the clouds are an emanation of the ocean; and that man, as part of the universe, is as literally a portion of the Supreme Being as the raindrops are literally a portion of the sea. They will again become the sea, but are for the time being far from home and are in no sense at that time the sea. There is an actual separation in what we call space and yet there remains an inalienable relationship in nature between them. Regarded as individual drops they have lost the grandeur, the power and the function of the sea. Yet each is a miniature sea. Each has the very essence and actual nature of the sea, and each will ultimately return to the sea.

And thus it is in the relationship between God and man from the viewpoint of immanence. As the raindrop is to the ocean in the material world, the finite being is to the Supreme Being in the spiritual world. The soul is literally a spark from the Divine Life, raying outward into material realms and ultimately returning with a rich harvest of experience to its source. The conception of God immanent,

therefore, accepts most literally the great truth that "in Him we live and move and have our being." We are inseparable from Him. We are divine fragments of the One Life. We are gods in the making.

There is no exaggeration in the statement that these two views are equally orthodox. In western civilization there may be ten who believe in transcendence only, for every one who believes that immanence alone represents the truth of nature; but the minority have the thinkers and scholars with them.

If we go back to the early Christian period we shall discover that the Christian Fathers held the view of immanence. Indeed, go back to the Old Testament account of cosmogony and we read of man that *"In His own image created He him."* Image is defined as a reflection, a likeness. In what does this likeness consist? Since God is immaterial it cannot refer to physical characteristics. It can mean only that in spiritual essence, in power, in wisdom, in compassion, man is an image of God. The difficulty with those who hold that widespread western view which is antagonistic to immanence is that instead of thinking of man as a reflection or image of God, they think of God as a reflection and extension of the best characteristics of man!

It is this grand old Christian idea of the immanence of God that the Theosophist has in mind when he asserts that all human beings are essentially divine; that each of us is an embryo god. It is a conception of the soul that is in harmony with the scriptures, with ancient and modern philosophy and with the working hypotheses of science, for it

is inseparably associated with the idea of evolution; and it was proclaimed in many forms by the Christ Himself, when He spoke from the hills of Galilee.

Now, if the immanence of God is a truth of nature we shall be able to establish the fact by an analysis of man. We shall find inherent in him the qualities of a god. Accustomed as we are to looking at the shadow side of human nature it will at first seem startling to declare that angelic attributes are common property. And yet it is unquestionably true that when we penetrate the exterior strata of the human being that contains the unpleasant and repulsive—which is but a phase of evolution, as scaffolding is an ugly but necessary phase of architecture—we find the most conclusive evidence of the inherent divinity of man. Convincing proof of this *is his recognition of his imperfection.* Were he less than an embryo god he would be blind to his faults. Emerson says something like this: "Granted that we are base, *but how do we know that we are base?*" In that sentence the American philosopher shows man's divinity. That which is below the human level cannot see its imperfection. A tiger does not think of himself as being cruel. A horse does not censure himself for being ignorant. A pig has no remorse about his greed. But man recognizes cruelty, admits his ignorance and apologizes for his greed; and in all this he proves his innate divinity.

But man does more than recognize his imperfections. To this evidence of his divinity he adds proof that he is a god in the making *by his efforts to transcend imperfection.* The whole history of human evolution is but a striving for perfection. It

is what has been called "the divine urge." It is the water of evolution seeking its source as the raindrop returns to the sea. It is the spiritual gravity that proves the oneness of all life.

Now, this old and beautiful truth of the immanence of God will enable us to get a correct understanding of what inspiration is. To live an inspired life we must, of course, comprehend inspiration.

The common view of inspiration is that with which most of us became familiar in our childhood days. It assumed that only writers of the Christian scriptures, the prophets, the saints and the seers, were inspired. That belief goes naturally with the mechanical theory of creation. The relationship between God and man becomes that of autocrat and subject. He "made" men as men make toys. Some He fashioned to be prophets and saints. Others He made to be ignoramuses and villains! There was a gulf between God and man and the seer was a link across. He was something unique, not in the natural order, but different from the human mass. He was supposed to be divinely inspired because he was set apart to speak for God, as a prime minister speaks for a king. To have suggested that the inspired person spoke less than the whole truth on any subject, or himself comprehended but a fragment of truth, would have been considered blasphemous.

This seer of the transcendence idea had little to do with worldly things. He dealt more with the future than with the present. His visions were not related to the work-a-day world. This life seemed to be of questionable value—a fleeting sorrow to

be tolerated as a child gets through with the measles, a period of existence not to be enjoyed, but rather the transitory stage of unavoidable evil that will be followed in due course with life that is worth while!

Special inspiration is consistent only with a purely mechanical theory of creation. If that illogical and unscientific conception of the universe is thrown aside the old view of inspiration must go with it. What, then, *is* inspiration and what is the inspired life?

Inspiration is the influx of the divine life into the human being, and it becomes possible in exact proportion that we comprehend the oneness of all life and strive to escape the thraldom of self-interest. Inspiration is an intensification of the divine force that is within all human beings—not a creation of what does not exist but an evolution of what is there, as a spark may be fanned into a flame. When one is inspired the god within has been aroused, comprehension of the unity of all life has dawned, compassion is born and we behold the phenomenon of the human evolving toward the superhuman. Inspiration then, is not dependent on a special act of God, *but on a special effort of man,* and it indicates the stage of evolution that he has attained.

The old idea that divine inspiration is a monopoly of religious writers and workers, of saints and seers, is as narrow as the theology of the monks of mediaeval times. The truth is that all whose greatness and goodness make them channels for the divine force are in some degree inspired. All whose love of their fellowmen has moved them to accept hardship

and poverty and pain in helping to lighten the sorrows of the world have lived the inspired life. It is no more possible to limit inspiration than it is to define God. Religious activities do not monopolize it. Who is the truly religious man? He who lives to serve the world. He who enlightens mankind. He who feeds the hungry and lifts the fallen. He who fights the battles of the oppressed. He who lives in advance of his times and in exchange for his brave opinions accepts payments in the coin of calumny. He who gives his life for a principle, even through mistaken judgment, in a bad cause. Whether famous or obscure, whether respectable or despised, whether accepting the highest of religions or rejecting them all, they are the truly religious—they are all in the galaxy of the great.

Shakespeare did not write scripture, but he was as truly inspired as any saint. He comprehended the soul. He "held the mirror up to nature" and it reflected every height and depth of human emotion. He filled his stage with the actors of his intellect and they moved the world to laughter or to tears. He preached a hundred sermons in a single play. He stimulated imagination, he quickened sympathy, and enabled men to think the thoughts and live the lives of other men. Poet, artist, dramatist, philosopher, marvelous interpreter of nature, greater than genius —nothing less than inspiration can explain him!

Wagner will serve as another illustration. His art demonstrates this natural truth of inspiration in another way. He brought some portion of the wondrous harmony and regal grandeur of a higher plane into physical life. The music of Wagner has a kin-

ship with the majesty of the stars. It lifts the consciousness to higher realms. Why does it elevate and ennoble us? Because it arouses in some degree the consciousness of our relationship to the One Life. It awakens the inner god to temporary cognition of his own greatness. It is as though a prince, suffering from a lapse of memory, had become a wandering outcast. But suddenly some incident that stirs the depths of his being—a familiar landscape, a glimpse of a palace, a bugle call—brings temporary recollection and he becomes aware of his rank and station, aware that he is a member of a royal household and has all the time been a prince of the realm. He may slip back in a moment into forgetfulness. But think how even a flash of the truth must have thrilled him! And so it is with the soul encased in a physical body. It has identified itself with its present environment, but such music may lessen the illusion. In the same sense that the prophets were inspired Wagner was inspired. Some portion of the divine life flowed through him and drew men upwards.

All the poets who have moved the heart and awakened the imagination of mankind are examples of the inspired life. The God that speaks through them is the same God that speaks through the recognized saviours of the world. The spirit of protest flashes out against some long-standing wrong or injustice because the unity of all life has been recognized and the welfare of the stranger has become the heart's concern. We need not go to ancient history to find inspired lives. They are all about us. We need not even go abroad in our search. In the

brief history of America scores of heroic men and women have fearlessly attacked the vices of the times—the inhumanities and superstitions of their day. Such lives are inspired. Such people are the messengers of God.

The old idea that only those who are engaged in some distinctly religious activity can live the inspired life is utterly inconsistent with the belief in the immanence of God, and is at war with the principles of evolution. All activities of the business and political world play a necessary part in the evolution of intellect and compassion, without which there can be no religion. There is still lingering in the world too much of the tendency to regard the life of the physical plane as comparatively unimportant. Those who give their entire attention to a future heaven are likely to stumble over the simplest duties of earth. This world is as important as any world and this life is as sacred as any life. In physical existence we are getting precisely the lessons we require for evolving the virtues that will make heaven at all possible and enable us to comprehend and enjoy it. The physical plane is as necessary to the heaven life as the primary school is necessary to the university, and it is just as divine as any other plane. No department of human experience is higher or lower than another. They are merely mutually dependent. No method of human perception or cognition is more important or sacred than another. We truly say that intuition is higher than intellect; and yet until intellect is sufficiently evolved to hold impulse in check, intuition cannot act. The higher is dependent on the lower.

The mind of the surgeon is higher than the nerves of his body; yet his expert life-saving knowledge waits upon his nerve control. Until he controls the lower, the higher is useless. Just so it is with intellect and intuition. Until intellect is evolved and used, intuition can be but poorly and uncertainly expressed. Now, nobody will deny that business and political life develop the intellect. They are therefore essential parts of the divine plan for the evolution of the soul.

Yes, the physical life is very important! The life after the loss of the material body may be bliss indeed for those who have lived up to their highest ideals here, but none the less the kingdom of heaven is within us and we may know it now. To work as the selfish work, but only for the welfare of the race; to play a heroic role in the life-drama of this, our world; to evolve every virtue and faculty that physical life can express; to win the love of new friends by our unselfishness and nobility; to hold the love of old friends by our loyalty and our faith; this also is heaven, and a heaven that is here!

We may look even in the political field for the inspired life and we find it in such men as Mazzini and Washington, in Paine and Lincoln. They had visions of a happier humanity on earth and their personal interests were forgotten in the effort to give those visions tangible form and to work them out in the terms of material success. They lived inspired lives. Political action can be just as sacred as ecclesiastical action. All the forces that work toward freedom, justice, equality and brotherhood, are divine forces.

We may go farther than declaring that the inspired life is to be found in the business and political realms. It is equally true that inspiration is consistent even with the forces of destruction. To a remarkable degree the inspired life has characterized the great iconoclasts. Luther, Bradlaugh, Besant, Ingersoll, Blavatsky—they are some of the heroic figures among the destroyers of outgrown theories and beliefs. Some of them are too recent to have taken the place in history to which they are entitled, for the inconoclast of one age is likely to be the saint or hero of the next. The world regards Luther and Blavatsky as representing different degrees of usefulness and beneficence only because of the different periods of time that separate them from us. The radicalism of Luther in the sixteenth century has become the ultra-conservatism of the twentieth.

These great iconoclasts were beneficent destroyers. They swept away the obsolete and cleared the path for progress. They stimulated thought. They worked against that mental inertia which characterizes the man who permits others to think for him. "It is a noble thing to destroy slavery and free men's bodies. It is a nobler thing to destroy superstition and free men's souls."

Every era must have iconoclasts—the idol breakers, the destroyers. There would be no progress without them for destruction is as necessary as construction. Consider how a city changes in a generation. Mechanics' shops are torn down that manufactories may be built. Hovels are cleared away that mansions may appear. Where the old tenements

stood fairer structures rise. The very knolls and dales yield to the transforming hand of man. Rivers change their courses, lakes appear, new landscapes come into being. A constant, almost imperceptible change goes on until in time the filthy streets have become boulevards, the dingy houses have vanished and we look upon a city of parks and palaces. The old, the inadequate, has disappeared. The new, the necessary, has arrived; but the new order could not be until the old order was destroyed. The two wings of the Angel of Progress are destruction and construction.

Of course the inconoclasts have always been misunderstood and denounced as fanatical and dangerous. The conservative majority never wishes to move on. They prefer the security of that which is to the uncertainty of that which they have not seen; and so they argue against progress and persecute its advocates. They insist that a religious belief that served their ancestors well is good enough for them. It is as though an ultra-conservative of a far past generation should have said to a progressive: "These old houses are well enough. They serve the purpose. You are an impractical visionary. You prate of buildings with wide windows that will make interiors marvelously light. You speculate upon systems of ventilation that are mere dreams. You hint at a better method of heating than the use of stoves. You even believe that in illumination we can discard oil lamps. You actually advocate displacing all the blessings of our glorious civilization with new fantastic things! You are not only impractical, you are sacrilegious. You would destroy our ancestral

homes with their sacred memories. You are attacking the most precious things of life. Let well enough alone. Keep on the safe side. These old houses may be somewhat dark and damp but what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us! It represents their highest conceptions of architecture. I'd rather sleep in this cellar of a room with its one dear old window a foot square and have rheumatism all my life, than to be false to the highest ideals of my fathers!"

The iconoclasts are the pioneers of the mental and moral world. They destroy the useless. They clear the field so that better building becomes possible. They are ambassadors of God, even when not aware of their own divinity, and none the less so because some of them have questioned His very existence. The iconoclast has a close relationship to the martyr. He is the center of a storm of human passion. He proclaims unpopular truth. Because it is unpopular his reputation, his liberty, his life, are in peril. Because it is truth it lays the foundation on which the future happiness of mankind rests. He shapes the destiny of an ungrateful world and all of the organized forces of society are against him. Whether his activities are religious or political he is equally the inspired messenger of God. Lowell puts it concisely in six lines:

Right forever on a scaffold;
Wrong forever on a throne;
But the scaffold shapes the future
And within the dim unknown
Standeth God, within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own!

Martyrdom is the logical outcome of iconoclasm. To some degree every iconoclast must become the martyr. The higher his work, the greater will be his sacrifice and the mightier will be his inspiration. To those who deny immortality the heroism of the martyr who goes to the stake may seem a foolish sacrifice; but his death is undying testimony to the truth of a greater life. It is evidence that the human being is greater than his physical existence—is so great, so divine, that at a certain stage of his evolution he *cannot* be false to a principle. He has reached a point where "life at any price" becomes contemptible and impossible, just because of his awakened divinity; and he can continue to realize his divinity only by uncompromising loyalty to truth. To retain his life by denying truth would be to lose more than life. Emerson says:

> Though love repine and reason chafe,
> There came a voice without reply—
> " 'Tis man's perdition to be safe,
> When for the truth he ought to die."

The distinguishing characteristic of the inspired life is the spirit of sacrifice. Whoever possesses that belongs to the nobility of nature, whether he wears the rags of a mendicant or the robes of a king. There is no stronger evidence of the immanence of God and the truth that His spirit flows through and inspires thousands outside the list of religious writers and speakers, than is furnished by the iconoclast and the martyr, who are necessarily the antagonists of the accepted ideas of their day. They represent the most godlike qualities and the highest ideals known

among men. Through such personalities divinity speaks, the Supreme Life flows, the divine fire is kindled in others and that miracle of miracles is wrought—the transformation of the commonplace into the sublime.

Who can grasp the tremendous significance of the literal divinity of man and the mighty truth that he is a god in the making? Behind him lie the conquered fields of his past evolution. Before him stretches the illimitable future in which achievements in wisdom, power and compassion shall be won in the star-lit temples of the gods!

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As Hints To Young Students of Occultism

by
L. W. ROGERS

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Hints To Students of Theosophy
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Many who earnestly desire to escape from the bondage of the lower nature, and to rise to spiritual illumination, are at a loss how to proceed, or even how to practically apply to daily life the occult information they may have gained by general reading. This is an effort to assist them—hints on how to utilize time and energy—a few guide-boards in the evolutionary wilderness at doubtful turns in the road, indicating the advantageous way to go and displaying warning signs across some attractive by-ways that lead to perilous places.

Hints To Students of Theosophy

The new student of Theosophy—he who is just beginning to learn that there is a deeper meaning in life than he had suspected—who has but recently come into contact with Theosophy's explanation of the purpose of life and the method of human evolution—often has the idea that there is some particular bit of information which, if he can but secure it, will enable him to quickly develop clairvoyance and rise into the possession of spiritual power. He has an impression that there are certain formulas which the teachers can hand over to him, if they will, that can be used as a key to unlock the storehouse of occult knowledge. If the beginner would make rapid progress in evolving the divine powers within him he should put aside such notions and realize at once that all any teacher can do for him is to point out the way in which he can help himself and that knowledge of the path to be followed will come to him in exact proportion to the earnestness of his desire to find it. He should remember, too, that there are precepts to practice as well as knowledge to gain. It is extremely important that he study the literature of occultism, read and learn all he possibly can from those who have information to impart, but something more is necessary. As he acquires these spiritual truths he must strive to live them, to shape his daily life by them. Fortunate indeed is he who can make his inner spiritual development keep pace with his intellectual acquirement of the facts. To discover a spiritual truth and then make no use of it in the evolution of one's character is quite as bad, if not worse, than to

remain in ignorance of it; for responsibility is measured by opportunity.

The idea that anybody can put the beginner quickly into possession of spiritual power is as erroneous as it would be to suppose that by handing him a diploma a university president can give him an education. This notion that Theosophy has occult wealth to be handed over in a lump sum—to be conferred instead of earned—is usually accompanied by the desire to be conspicuously helpful, to quickly undertake some work, the benevolence of which is equaled by its dramatic method; to become one of the invisible helpers who has the power to work in his astral body during the hours when the physical body is asleep. That is a most laudable ambition and a worthy thing to attain. But the point that should be understood about it is that the way to it is through actual spiritual development and not by the immediate opening of astral sight. The first step toward being an invisible helper is to become a visible helper, to cultivate the desire to help by exercising our benevolent impulses on the human beings about us. When we have actually become of service on the physical plane, when we have utilized the opportunities of our daily life to assist others, and have thus proven that the thing we really desire is to be helpful and not merely to possess occult power, we shall have taken the first necessary step in the realization of our ambition.

If the beginner is anxious to know how rapidly he is getting on in spiritual development he has only to watch his daily life. His first work is to get

control of his physical body and make it obey his will. Therefore if he can see that he is growing less irritable, that trifling things are losing their power to annoy him, that he is not so easily thrown off his balance as he used to be, he knows that his will is becoming established in its power to direct the physical and astral mechanism through which it functions. It is always to the little things, rather than to great events, that he should look as tests of the new powers he is developing. His fitness to pass the portal, later in his evolution, toward which he is now directing his first uncertain steps, is not determined by one supreme occasion, like an examination for entering some university, so much as it is being determined by the thoughts and desires of his daily life; and it is the little things, the small problems of the daily life that are hourly testing his judgment, his sincerity, his courage and his patience. Unless he begins to be successful in meeting these he cannot hope to become even a candidate for greater tests of his powers.

There are many ways in which the young student of occultism can begin the cultivation of the character qualities he must possess before he can go far in his efforts in conscious evolution,—scores of things he can do in the line of character building that will lay an enduring foundation for the spiritual power he would attain; and let it be well understood that all such work done in the beginning will save him much trouble, and give him great satisfaction, later on. The reward for his pains will be rich indeed. He who erects a fine building upon a weak and illy-constructed foundation is no more

foolish than he who does careless work in the foundation he lays for his temple not built with hands. Every flaw in the foundation is a menace for the future; and is not that precisely why the testing is so constant and continuous? The things that ceaselessly test us, that sometimes appear to bar our further progress, should be as welcome as the test of plumb and square in the house-builder's operations.

An excellent thing for one to do when he is first coming into a knowledge of Theosophy, and is beginning to seek the way forward by its guiding light, is to ask himself in what particular traits he is lacking and then earnestly set about acquiring them. It is usually not difficult to find some weak points. Is there sound moral courage? Does he ever fear to express an opinion that he feels ought to be expressed, but which he knows to be unpopular? Is he firm in defense of the truth, as he sees it, or does he take refuge in silence when he instinctively feels he should speak? Moral courage he must have and he should begin to inspect his daily conduct and seek to strengthen his character in this direction. And so he may run down the scale of his virtues and his frailties, critically examining each point, until he comes to things we usually consider as of no importance. Is he careless about the waste of time? Does he realize the value of every hour of his waking consciousness? Has he begun to understand the fact that the average man fritters away in an aimless sort of fashion by far the larger part of his physical lifetime, and makes but correspondingly feeble progress, instead of which he could, if he would, so

use that wasted time that it would count tremendously in quickening his evolution? If he does understand that fact he will begin to take account of his waking hours and ask what he has to show for them. He will scrupulously cultivate the habits of promptness and punctuality. If he has an appointment at a certain hour he will not arrive fifteen minutes later, nor five minutes later. If he has letters requiring replies he will not permit them to lie about unanswered awaiting the vague and uncertain time when he happens to feel like writing. Among his earliest lessons should be this fact: that procrastination is not only "the thief of time" but also of other people's time and that responsibility for careless conduct by no means ends with his personal loss. In many directions he will find opportunities, if he seeks them, to strengthen his character and perfect his armor against the coming day of a mighty conflict. Great things are possible only to strong souls and it is from the trivial events of daily life that strength is won. Until we have become masters of the little things there is nothing great awaiting us.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENTION

Perhaps it would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of the thing we call "attention." It should be assiduously cultivated in every possible way. Whatever is being done should be done with an undivided mind, whether it is important or trivial. Attention to the work in hand is not only the first step toward success with that particular bit

of work but is also a step in actual occult development. To study a subject for a half hour with unwavering attention accomplishes more than to follow it a half day with a wandering mind; and while we are thus gaining knowledge rapidly by determinedly sustained attention we are doing something more. We are bringing the mind into the particular condition it must reach before any marked progress in occultism is possible.

The mental habit of most people reminds one of a kitten at play. It strikes at a swinging string, catches up a bit of paper, leaps into the air after a fly, then darts into another room to dash from object to object in a new field, all for no other purpose than because it has nothing more serious in life to attend to. So it is with the wandering mind. It fills up the time with a multitude of trifling thought that, all summed up in the end, amount to simply nothing. It occupies itself with dreamy speculations about nothing in particular, darts backward to uselessly run over a recent conversation, leaps off to review a journey made a week ago, dallies over a remembered remark by a friend, suddenly recalls a duty not discharged, forgets it the next instant because a vehicle passes the window, and then dashes off on some entirely new round of equally frivolous mental activities that are as devoid of connection with the first set as they are of method or purpose.

Such a state of mind belongs to that period of our existence when we had no knowledge of the purpose of life. It is not becoming to the student of Theosophy and he should, without any loss of

time, begin an earnest effort to free himself from a mental habit so pernicious. A good way to accomplish this is to endeavor to keep the mind steadily upon the work in hand, whether it is reading, writing, talking, listening, or discharging some simple duty. When it is some pastime or recreation, to which attention is turned for rest, the mind should be fully given up to it and kept entirely away from the work that has been temporarily dropped.

Attention is absolutely necessary to occult progress. It is impossible to imagine anybody getting on without acquiring it; and the way to acquire it to the degree that makes it effective is to keep constantly at it in all the little things we do until it becomes an established and deep-seated habit. Is not attention the very basis upon which occult development rests? Take as an example telepathy, with which most people have had more or less experience. You are about to say something when your friend says it for you. You have decided to move a chair or open a window, but before you can rise your companion requests you to do that particular thing. You have not thought for a week about purchasing a certain needed article when it comes into your mind suddenly, but before your thought can frame itself into words your companion brings up the subject. Very often you both speak the same words at the same instant about the same thing. Very often, too, you know precisely what another is going to say just before he utters it. Now, this occurs when the mind is not disturbed by other thoughts and things. We cannot imagine a person getting the thought of another when his

own mind is galloping about among other subjects. How can he get what another is thinking when he does not even get what he is saying? But we can imagine telepathy being cultivated by close and sympathetic attention. We can imagine a person listening so intently to another's conversation and getting so completely into his line of thought that he gets his ideas before they are expressed in words. Such centered and sustained attention necessarily cultivates sensitiveness.

A very good time for cultivating the attention is while listening to a discourse. An especial effort can be made to get every idea expressed by the speaker; and if, as sometimes happens, the ideas are not numerous, to give the closest attention to all that is said, keeping mental account of the points as they are developed without losing anything that is being stated. Whether one agrees with the speaker or not should not be permitted to impair the attention. In either case the mind should be held unwaveringly upon the discourse, so firmly and persistently that there is no opportunity for other things to intrude. If the ideas come from the speaker too slowly to occupy the mind it can be kept busy reviewing the points thus far made, or even in speculating upon what are likely to come, but in any case it should be kept to the speaker and his subject with the greatest care. The attention should not be permitted to fail from the moment he rises until he has finished. This attention should be absolute. If somebody enters or leaves the room disregard it. Try to see nothing but the speaker and hear nothing but his discourse, until it is finished.

If this practice should, at first, prove trying it need not be continued throughout an entire sermon or lecture. But for such length of time as may be decided upon the attention should be rigorously sustained. If the discourse is a good one much more will thus be learned from it. If it is of the order that bores one it will be robbed of much, if not all, of its oppressiveness; for when the mind is concentrated upon it, and busy speculating about it, time does not hang heavily, but passes without notice. An unfailing method of shortening the apparent time of any discourse is to concentrate the attention upon it.

Another thing which the student should take up is the matter of original thinking. Naturally he will read much of occultism in the books written by occultists, and he will have a tendency to fall into their style of expression. When he prepares a paper on a theosophical subject he will usually find, upon critically examining his work, that he has set forth much the same points, in much the same way, with the same degree of emphasis and with the same kind of illustrations that his authors have used. Often he unconsciously falls into almost precisely the same expressions. All this is work in an imitative rut, from which he should make a determined effort to extricate himself. No matter how admirable the work of the teacher is the student does not desire to become either a copyist or a parrot. He does not want his mind to get the habit of running only along the grooves fashioned by others and then not running at all when it reaches the end of the groove. To avoid this misfortune he should read

only for a short time and then stop and ponder well the ideas presented. Let him try to find various points of view and see if he cannot think of something more to be said on the matter. He can call up in his mind some of his experiences that are in line with the statement of principles given and ponder over the corroboration thus furnished. When he discusses with others what he has read let him try to avoid the exact language used by the author and put the thought into original expressions of his own. He should endeavor to think out original illustrations to illuminate the subject, and new sets of circumstances to which the principles stated will apply; and the way to do it is to think, and think, and think, about it. Original thinking is an invaluable accomplishment and the only reason why there is not more of it is because there are so few who are willing to give it the necessary time and effort.

PERSISTENT AND REGULAR EFFORT

Another matter which the student who is just entering upon the study of occultism should have well settled in his mind in the beginning is the necessity for hard work. Whoever starts out with the notion that indifferent and desultory study of the subject will carry him through is foredoomed to failure; and he who imagines that by galloping through the literature of occultism, as he would read a collection of novels, he can become an occultist will be nearly as far from his goal when he finishes as when he began. He may give to his occult studies much time or little, as he will. That is not the point.

The important thing is that whether the period be several hours a day or but one hour, or even the half of it, it should be characterized by that mental energy that is the natural result of an eager desire and a steady purpose. Half-hearted work is but little better than no work. Without hard work the student's progress will be discouragingly slow. That is true of all our undertakings. Why should it not be true of occultism? The university student who makes rapid progress in law, or medicine, or mathematics, or languages, is he who works hard. Genius is the essence of hard labor. It may have been performed in a past life but that does not alter the fact. We have no faculties that we have not made and every mental effort now is determining our intellectual accomplishments of the future, as well as accelerating present progress.

Not only should we work with wide-awake energy but we should work with persistence and regularity if we would get on. Regularity has a magic of its own. A given amount of energy put forth regularly, steadily, produces enormously more than the same amount of energy put forth irregularly, spasmodically. Let the student set aside each day a certain time for occult studying and thinking, and permit no break in the work, and he will make gratifying progress. The difficulty of quickly getting down to work grows less and less. The art of becoming absorbed in the subject matter becomes easier and easier. Soon he finds that his hour or half-hour, as the case may be, counts in results out of all proportion to the time recorded by the clock. But let him make the mistake of giving occult studies

two hours today, nothing tomorrow, fifteen minutes the next day, nothing more for a week, then a full day "to make up for lost time," with such future chance periods as convenience may dictate—make it the sport of circumstance and the dependent of caprice—and a sum total of many more hours will take him a shorter distance on his spiritual journey. By the first method he gets into the current of regularity and it carries him along with a sort of cumulative momentum. He is really entering upon a new moral and intellectual life—acquiring a new viewpoint, a new standard of measures, setting up new habits of consciousness—and a certain inertia has to be overcome. By regularity he not only gets into the new stride quickly but does not wholly lose it during the intervening hours; while by the second method he not only loses it but loses most of his study time in getting back to it. He has the inertia to overcome again and again and spends most of his time making new starts instead of making progress.

Regularity in the study of occultism counts heavily for progress in still another way. Such study is usually taken up by the beginner after he has seen or heard something that has aroused his interest in the subject. It may be some occult experience, or a conversation with a friend, or an account of psychic phenomena in a newspaper, or a lecture on Theosophy. Something has aroused a temporary interest. Now, if he sets out with a plan and purpose and decides in advance that he will follow a fixed program of daily study there is a fair chance that he will acquire a permanent interest in the matter

before his enthusiasm wanes. But if he has no prearranged program, and only decides to utilize for such reading and study the idle time that he may chance to have in the coming days, he is extremely likely to permit one thing after another to push aside his occult studies until his interest slowly fades out and his golden opportunity is gone. It *is* a golden opportunity when any human being is, by any occurrence whatever, brought into contact with occult teaching; and fortunate indeed are those who realize it and promptly act upon it. It may mean to them, at its very least, all the difference there is between many happy, useful lives and many very commonplace ones, although it may appear on the surface to be a trivial matter whether one follows up such an opportunity at once or not. Trifles at the starting point may represent great differences farther along. Two rain-drops may fall nearly together at the top of a mountain range and yet, because one strikes the eastern slope and the other the western, ultimately find their way into different oceans. Those who have a fondness for such analysis have often shown that great events have turned on the pivots of trifles. The difference between adopting a regular program for daily occult study and adopting another that is lawless and erratic is one of those apparent trifles that serve as a pivot on which a destiny may turn.

Enthusiasm is a thing of priceless value. Somebody has defined it as the power of God made manifest in a human being. Whatever else it may be it is certainly a great motive power, a force that carries one forward and upward. The difference

between a person filled with enthusiasm about occultism and another who is not is the difference between life and death. One is asleep to everything but his material surroundings. The other is awake, aroused, in touch with the life currents of the universe. The chief work of the theosophical lecturer is to arouse such enthusiasm—to so present spiritual facts to the minds that can receive them that the recognition of universal truth kindles the divine fire within. With those who have reached a certain point in evolution this flame of enthusiasm will burn steadily, however feebly, and they may fortunately walk in the light for the remainder of this incarnation. With many others it will slowly subside, leaving them, however, more susceptible to future stimuli. Happy indeed is that truth seeker who resolves upon a program of daily study and, while the flame of his new enthusiasm still burns, gets settled into a fixed habit that will carry him safely to the point where his temporary interest has become permanent.

THOUGHT ASSIMILATION IS ESSENTIAL TO SOUL GROWTH

The student of Theosophy should read much but think more. He could get along without reading if books on occultism could not be had, but he could not get on without thinking if all the books ever written were on hand. There is a close analogy between the growth of the physical body and the growth of the soul. In order that the body may grow we must not only eat food but also digest it.

Of course there can be no bodily growth whatever without digestion and assimilation. By digestion the food is reduced to the condition in which it is available for body building and by assimilation it is built in. And precisely so it is with soul expansion. The raw materials of facts, principles and experiences must undergo a certain process before they are available for soul growth. Reading and observing are merely the acts of collecting soul food. If we do nothing more it is as though one should eat when, through some physiological derangement, the function of digestion is suspended. There could then be no gain to him from it and no growth on account of it. The mind is to the soul what the stomach is to the physical body—the laboratory of preparation. The mind takes the accumulation of facts, principles, observations and experiences, and from the whole mass extracts conceptions, new views of things, new understandings of life—extracts the very gist of the totality of perception, and this essence of the whole is then ready for assimilation by the soul, ready to be built into the inner body. By the action of the mind the rough material for soul growth has been transmuted and made available; and without such action that material in the rough could no more be utilized for soul growth than fruits and vegetables, as such, can be built into the physical body. Mind action, then, is not merely important; it is absolutely necessary.

Whatever the time may be that one can set apart for occult studies each day there should be a reasonable portion of it given up exclusively to quiet thought into which no reading is permitted

to intrude. It is a common error for those just becoming interested in Theosophy to bury themselves in some book during every moment that can be snatched from pressing duties. This eager desire to read everything on the subject within reach is most commendable and the burning zeal that grasps at every possible acquisition foreshadows rapid progress; but the sooner that zeal is directed into channels along which it may make the most of the energy expended the better. To this end a certain definite time should be determined upon for quiet thinking about the higher life. A half-hour is little enough but twenty, or even ten, minutes is much better than nothing. The hour at which it is desirable will naturally vary with the habits and duties of different people; but it should be at that part of the day when there is the most freedom from one's daily activities and the least liability to interruption. Noon time may be desirable for some. Early twilight may be better for others. The hour of retiring for the night will probably be the most convenient for many. This time for quiet thought should not be made a substitute for morning meditation, if the student is fortunate enough to be giving a few minutes to that shortly after rising. It should be a period of tranquil thinking and aspiration rather than of strenuous will-compelling mental effort. The mind can dwell upon what has been read during the day and the facts and principles set forth by the author, or at least some of them, can be recalled, pondered over and applied to what one knows of life through personal experience. A part of the time can be given to the experience of the past twenty-

four hours. The mind can run back over the winding path traversed during that time, the people met, the things said, done, thought and desired, and each can be considered in the light of the higher life. Was the conduct all that could be desired? Was any opportunity to be helpful overlooked? Was any word spoken that were better unsaid? Was any thought entertained that should not have been harbored? In short, did you live up to your highest aspiration or was there a weak point to be carefully strengthened for the morrow? In thus pondering over the reading and the events of the day, and renewing the determination to live up to the highest one can conceive, the half hour speeds swiftly and pleasantly past and by the wondrous alchemy of thought experience is transmuted into spiritual strength.

The entire time of this meditative fragment of the day should not be given to retrospective thought. At least a few minutes should always be devoted to pondering over the inner life and the purpose of existence. This will prove a source of real strength —a living spring of progressive energy. Think upon the desirability of the higher life and of the transitory nature of everything in the visible world. Reflect upon the swift flight of time, the ever-increasing speed with which the years are rolling by; upon the fact that the physical life is as short as it is important and that whoever would use it wisely has no time to lose from what remains. Consider the utter uselessness of striving for wealth, of accumulating a fortune, large or small, of giving more attention to the physical body than will keep it in health and comfort; and remember that all

energy, beyond that, expended upon physical things, to accumulate them and take care of them, is worse than wasted; for it is thought and energy invested in the perishable—time and energy that could be utilized in the useful work of helping others forward, which incidentally builds into your own soul the things that do not perish but which will increase your strength and widen your field of action for future lives. Reflect upon the fact that warm friendships are superior to material possessions; upon the desirability of sterling character qualities; upon the fact that every virtue, grace, power and attribute of character built into one's self during this physical life becomes an eternal possession—a never-failing source of sunshine and joyousness through all future lives. Recall the most carefree, joyous, exalted moments of your conscious existence and reflect that that condition should be your normal physical life —that life rightly lived *is joy,* although the vast majority do not suspect it, and that a far happier life than the imagination can picture can be yours in the near future if the aspiration to live up to the highest that is in you is assiduously cultivated. For at least a few moments daily give free rein to your imagination and let it picture the future field of your activities—and thus build the stage upon which you shall play the drama of your lives. Refuse to live within the narrow walls of this one incarnation. Sweep them aside and realize that this little life is but the dull and gloomy morning of the coming radiant day. Plan not for this small hour but count the lives that lie ahead as a part, with this, of one imposing whole. Look forward to future lives as

youth looks forward to maturity. Make your plans for the remainder of this incarnation as in the closing period of school years one plans his life's career, shaping his present energies to serve his future purpose. This daily glimpse of wider fields in which the seeds of present thought shall blossom into deeds of worth in future lives will, in time, fan the faintest aspirations into steady flame and give to the inner life a reality that enables the student to comprehend something of the delusive character of the physical existence with its false standards that lead the unwary astray.

SAFE AND DANGEROUS MENTAL CONDITIONS

In the previous chapter it was suggested that the time set aside daily for reviewing the events of the preceding hours and pondering over the meaning of life and its varied problems should be a period of tranquil thought and aspiration. Perhaps it may not be amiss to add that the word "tranquil" should not be taken to mean the passivity that characterizes the trance medium who is about to pass "under control." To assume that attitude of mind is to abandon one-self to the psychic circumstances of the moment, without the slightest opportunity of judging whether they may be good or bad. It would be much as though a blind man who could swim but little should fling himself upon the tide, not knowing whether it would carry him into water that was safe and comfortable or into a dangerous undertow. The student's will should always be in control. Under no circumstances should it

be surrendered to anything or to anybody. It is his purpose to know himself and his environment; to obtain first-hand knowledge of the mysteries of life; to purify his vehicles of consciousness and develop his spiritual powers that he may be of the greatest possible assistance in spreading the light and helping others forward. It is not his purpose to evolve the characteristics that will permit others to speak through him—to lend his body to others to be used as an instrument for the communication of information about which he can personally know nothing and the truth or inaccuracy of which he cannot possibly determine. That sort of thing can well be left to those who desire to engage in it. The way of the student of occultism lies in the opposite direction. He is to learn the mastery of matter and acquire intelligent control of occult forces, not to become an unconscious and helpless automaton in the hands of others. Therefore when he withdraws daily into the quietude of the most retired spot to which he has access and there, alone with his thoughts, calmly and serenely gives himself up to reflections upon the higher life, his mental attitude should be one of reception but not of surrender. He should be as one who listens for the faintest whisper from the depths of being, but who uses discrimination in its testing and reason in its interpretation. He should be at all times mentally and morally awake and alert. He should not be misled by the widespread belief that the invisible world is sharply divided into two parts and that those who seek information from the realm hidden to physical senses are surely making connections with that part known

as heaven when they succeed in establishing communication.

Another common misconception is that all who have died are good and wise, and it is a dangerous one. The chief difference between those we call dead and the rest of us is that they have no physical bodies through which to function in the visible world. As to moral difference there is none; and the astral world certainly presents quite as many grades of moral and intellectual development as the physical life does. The selfishness and depravity that characterize unnumbered thousands here are fully as conspicuous there. Moreover it is the lower and grosser part of the astral world that impinges upon the physical and the facility of communication increases with the coarseness and materiality of the matter forming the normal habitat of the disembodied intelligence. Therefore, should the student of occultism surrender his physical body to such entities as may desire to take possession of it, the probability of getting information of any value is exceedingly small, while the possibility of coming into contact with most unfortunate influences is considerable. Nor would the good intentions of the student be a guarantee that this would not occur, any more than the good intentions of an experimenting chemist will insure him against injury if he brings the wrong ingredients together. The outcome for the student would doubtless depend upon the karma of the past and the natural affinity he might, or might not, have for various classes of entities inhabiting the lower levels of the astral world. But, aside from what might occur in such

a case, the passive surrender of his body to become the instrument of another, no matter how well he might be protected by his karma, is a step in the wrong direction and therefore not progress at all. One purpose of human evolution is to achieve the mastery of matter, to come into perfect control of the vehicles of consciousness. To this end the will must be cultivated, not surrendered; strengthened, not enfeebled.

SELF-RELIANCE

One of the things to be constantly aimed at is self-reliance. It should be most assiduously cultivated. The sincere student of occultism is striving to perfect himself as an instrument to be used in quickening human evolution. He may now be serving that sublime purpose in the very humblest way but he will not overlook the fact that great tasks await the willing and capable worker; that volunteers for selfless service are very, very few and that the need of them is great. Therefore he will understand that as rapidly as he can fit himself for effective service the larger tasks will be found at hand, awaiting him. But only those who have evolved the necessary qualities are available for the work and can hope to be given a part in it; and of what use would one be who has not become self-reliant? Worlds are not shaped with the helpless hands of infants. We must get beyond the clinging, timorous, dependent stage that characterizes children, before we shall be of much real service in the evolutionary work. There is an attitude of mind that means "Well, I'm willing enough but I don't know

what to do. I'm ready to work if somebody will furnish me a place." That is much better than indifference but it is not the self-reliant attitude that one should strive to reach. The desirable mental attitude is one of strong, resolute determination to *find* a way to serve without anybody's help—a desire to be useful which is directed by steady, self-reliant purpose.

In the most prosaic affairs of life and in earth's hurly-burly business grind it is not the timid and uncertain who move the world. The self-reliant man comes to the front in times of difficulty and peril as naturally as oil comes to the surface of water. He belongs there by right of ability to manage, to direct. Being in control of himself he can control events. Being master of himself he is master of the situation. In a crisis all instinctively turn to the masterful man.

One of the divine characteristics of occultism is its absolute justice. Each is exactly what he makes himself and gets precisely what he earns; not a jot less nor more. He merely comes into his own. But he must come in on his own account. He cannot play the role of Micawber in occultism, waiting for "something to turn up" that will carry him into useful and desirable occult work as a political upheaval sometimes carries an indifferent candidate into office to the surprise of everybody. The successful ones who have made rapid progress in occultism are those who have resolutely forced their way forward. A beginner is often inclined to think that it is only a few who can do important things and the rest are necessarily doomed to be satisfied

with looking on and applauding. They forget that a multiplicity of agencies and methods are used to hasten human evolution and that the apparently unimportant things are quite as necessary as those that attract attention. They also forget that those who are doing the great things once stood where the beginner now stands and that the younger student can as certainly reach an equally important and useful field of activities in the future, if he really desires to, and now seeks to be of service in the smaller way. If he puts his hand to the small work now he shall grasp the great task later on as certainly as he lives and thinks. But no one may hope to be entrusted with great responsibilities until he has proved that he is capable of discharging small ones.

THE FATAL DELUSION OF DELAY

Some sound advice can be given to seekers after occult wisdom, in two words: *act now*. Don't postpone good intention. The world is full of people who have a vague notion that at some indefinite time and in some dimly comprehended fashion they shall get to the point of being unselfishly useful to the world. Everywhere we meet the people who are going to do something "sometime." One is waiting until real estate takes a "boom" so that the enhanced value of his investments will pay his debts and *then* he will be free to devote himself to theosophical work. Another has ability as a public speaker and, with theosophical knowledge to impart, could render invaluable service. He realizes it but feels that he must stay in business until he "has made a lot

of money," not realizing that he doesn't in the least need a lot of money but that competent and sincere work will win its way. Another has put his financial faith in mines and is only waiting till they develop and *then,* well just wait, something tremendous will happen! This victim of delusion misses the point that a dollar in the hand is worth more than a million in the mine that have not been found. The dollar he really could give might put a theosophical book in a public library or buy a dinner for a hungry family or mend the shoes of a shivering child; but the millions he dreams about will very probably keep him impoverished in the search for them; and if the highly improbable should occur and they ever really appear they will so engross his attention in taking care of them that he won't have time to think of anything else. Another tells us he is studying Theosophy carefully and thoroughly and, when he has mastered it, he will begin to teach; quite overlooking the fact that if he were to live a thousand years in this particular life he could not have "mastered it"; and that if he really desires to teach others there are always those who know less than he does to be instructed. The test of ability to teach is not the fact that the would-be teacher knows everything but that he knows more than those who may be taught. "Every contact is an opportunity."

And thus it is with those who wait. The delusion may have one form or another but the result is the same—inactivity and loss of opportunity. The very fact that they feel that they should do something is the evidence that they have reached the point in

evolution where they *must* do something or miss their opportunity.

Act now. It is a thousand times better to do a little at once than to decide that a great deal shall be done in the indefinite future. It is the same species of delusion that afflicts those of higher intellectual development who yet do not stop to analyze their own motives and to see the inconsistency of their declarations. Anybody who really will do something in the future will be found doing a little something now—mingling at least a little present performance with his future promises. He will realize that the way to do things is to begin, no matter how feeble the beginning.

Act now. An occult significance invests those two little words. Action is the very expression of life on the physical plane. We are missing the purpose of life by inaction. We are simply marking time, not moving forward in the evolutionary march. So important is action that it is better even to blunder, while trying to do our best, than not to attempt to do anything at all. It is better for an infant to try to walk, and fall, than never to make the venture. The pain of the fall will pass and a permanent lesson will be learned. In India a mistaken class of devotees withdraw from the world of affairs and by cutting off almost entirely all relationship with the rest of the human race seek through isolation and inaction to avoid responsibility for wrong acts and seek salvation for the self. It is said by occult investigators that they succeed so well in the desire to hold themselves aloof from the race that a terrible isolation is their future fate. Against this foolish

course a great spiritual truth was once proclaimed: *"Inaction in a deed of mercy is action in a deadly sin."* And so none may escape his responsibilities to others by withdrawing tortoise-like, into his shell of self-interests.

The second word shares the importance of the first. "Now" signifies the most vital period of all time. The magic of success lies within that little word. The man who procrastinates necessarily misses opportunities. The very essence of success is the ability to instantly seize and utilize an opportunity. Every event has its "psychological moment." The most momentous affairs of the world swing this way, or that way, with the decision of some master mind. On the other hand the results in many a battle and in many a national crisis have been changed and the tide of success turned in the direction of disaster by the hesitation and indecision of one who was the unfortunate victim of procrastination. To form the habit of quick decision and prompt action is to arm oneself with a mighty weapon for successful work; and with the cultivation of such a habit of life gradually comes the ability to recognize the propitious moment when it arrives.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

That tide is often at the flood for a moment only and he who, through procrastination, fails to utilize that golden moment has paid dearly for his negli-

gence. Procrastination is one of the fetters that bind, one of the bars that imprison. If we would make progress worthy of students of occultism we must free ourselves from this encumbrance. We must acquire the art of prompt decision and immediate action. We must not be postponers. We must not be content with resolving that a thing ought to be done, and then quieting the divine insistence of the higher self with the comfortable thought that sometime, somehow, we shall do it. We must acquire the beneficent habit of doing things for the common welfare and of doing them now.

PROTECTION AGAINST DANGER

There is one thing the new student of occultism should not overlook, for its importance to him is tremendous. He should keep well in mind the fact that the development of the heart qualities is the very essence of real progress. He is likely to have the notion that it is all a matter of acquiring knowledge; that he can settle down to a study of the books and that the information he thus gets will solve all his problems; that there is nothing to do but to acquire a thorough understanding of occult laws and principles. But this is a grave mistake. A mere intellectual grasp of Theosophy will be of little service to him. Indeed, if he does not live it as well as understand it, then occult knowledge will be a detriment to him. If he uses the information he acquires merely to get more from the material life for himself he would be more fortunate without it. A purely selfish use of anything is unfortunate

but a selfish use of occult knowledge is most unfortunate. Such a course leads onward to a very great danger—a peril that increases with every forward step in knowledge that is used for one's self. There may be swift progress in the acquirement of such knowledge but it is not spiritual progress. It is merely intellectual development; and it is only a question of time when the student who follows that course will likely find himself cut off from the life current of Theosophy and left to hug his intellectual idols by the wayside—the most fortunate thing that, under the circumstances, can happen to him. The alternative is that he may go on in occult development and the acquiring of occult power for selfish use until he has brought upon himself the corrective reaction of nature for such misuse of her gifts—a fate that sums up in one tragedy all the pains, penalties and horrors the imagination can picture.

Of course such a possible *finale* lies in the far away time, along the intellectual road, but that only serves to increase the present danger by making it appear distant, vague and uncertain. But the relationship between beginning and end is as certain as that between the placid waters of the Niagara river and the rushing falls a few miles below. A stranger on those waters, who had never seen the falls, would regard a warning as an impertinence. His boat would move obedient to the oars and there would be no more indication of danger than upon any other river. Should he choose to drift slowly down the stream he would be a long time reaching the point where his speed would perceptibly in-

crease. Then its steady acceleration would be so gradual that there would be no apparent cause for alarm until it had become too late for possible escape. No less directly connected are the trifling use of occult powers for selfish purposes and the great peril that is related to it. Make no mistake because the water is placid now. *The falls are ahead, nevertheless,* for all who follow the selfish course.

It is clear, then, that the student cannot begin too early to consider this danger and to take the precautions that shall insure his safety. Unselfishness will be his protection. By its cultivation he fortifies himself; he insures his safety in advance. He should try to acquire the habit of thinking much of others, and considering their welfare. He should think of the occult information he gets, not as so much personal possession, but as so much added knowledge and power with which to help others along. The desire to help should be cultivated in every possible way until it becomes the habit of the waking consciousness. There is an inner and an outer courtesy. The outer concerns itself with forms. It is conventional and gives skill in social graces and in certain rules and usages that prevent friction. The inner courtesy is born of a real regard for the welfare of others. The person who possesses it is thinking less of how he shall appear to others than of how he can be helpful to those about him; and nobody does, or can, possess this inner courtesy until he *feels* right toward other human beings. It is the very blossom of unselfishness. This mental attitude of helpfulness should be constant and enduring. It should be carried through the daily round of

occupations. In the home, the office, the street, the Theosophist should be keen and alert for every opportunity to be useful. He should cultivate both the habit of being helpful and the habit of utilizing every opportunity that comes to him to assist others.

It is said that in all true schools of occultism there is a golden rule that insures the safety of the student; and this rule is that for every step taken in acquiring occult knowledge three steps are to be taken in perfecting character. From this it will easily be seen that it is not enough to cultivate the habit of helpfulness. It is most excellent and necessary but there should be something more. The student should work steadily at the development of the heart qualities, for his future safety lies there. His sympathy with suffering can be quickened and the heart made to keep pace with the intellect by practical work among the people about him wherever he may be. There are always the sick, the unfortunate, the blind, the aged and feeble. Every community has those who are confined to their homes by illness, accident or old age. Such people spend much time in lonely solitude. Those around them who are not in their condition are too busy to realize the situation. To an active person suddenly confined to a room by accident or by illness the hours of an afternoon spent alone seem endless. To an aged person accustomed to the more sociable way of the past generation—who feels that the world has moved on and left him—a call that breaks the monotony of a day with a conversation he can appreciate must be a boon. The student of occultism who is looking for opportunities to be useful and

for conditions that will quicken human sympathy need not look far. He can easily make up a practical working list by which he can daily give a half hour, or an hour, of thought and time to others entirely outside the line of what can be considered his duties or obligations. A cheery visit to the sick, a social chat with some person too infirm to go out, a trifling service to some unfortunate, are things of genuine value out of all proportion to their apparent worth. It is not difficult to find the unfortunate, for they are everywhere. The hospitals are excellent fields for benevolent work, and especially the county hospitals. In the free wards of any hospital there are always those suffering from the double affliction of sickness and poverty and the appearance of a sympathetic person as a visitor would be welcomed with delight.

Other avenues of helpfulness will open up to the person who turns his mind to the subject. If hospitals are not accessible then there are always the simpler things at hand. There are tired mothers who can be relieved of the care of children for a few hours; there are anxious fathers out of work who may possibly be helped to find employment; there are overworked factory girls, earning a bare living, who would be delighted with some discarded clothing; there are poor children in the poorer districts who seldom or never get an outing.

Nothing is more necessary to the student of occultism than such sympathetic participation in human affairs and yet it is a thing that is sadly neglected. There is no greater mistake than the belief that such work is unimportant, and can be

left to the Salvation Army or the Associated Charities, and no more fatal blunder than the notion that time cannot be taken from study in order to give trivial assistance to our less fortunate brothers. That is just what *can* be done with the greatest advantage to ourselves.

To set aside some part of one's time for the deliberate cultivation of human sympathy, to make oneself a center for radiating the sunshine of life, to thus take thought of the welfare of others, and to become practically helpful to them, is to imitate, in some degree, the life and work of the great Masters of Compassion who are giving, not some, but all of their energies to practical work for the world with never a thought of themselves.

It is a very grave mistake to become so absorbed in one's business or studies as to be almost unconscious of the lives of others. Such a life is one-sided and unbalanced. To spend all one's time accumulating information is second only to the foolishness of giving an incarnation to the accumulation of money —and that would be nearly as foolish as to spend a winter accumulating snow. It is the folly of follies to devote time exclusively to study, to the neglect of practice. And yet there are many who make that mistake. They acquire much occult information, which doubtless gives them the same sort of mental satisfaction that some people feel in accumulating money. But they make no use of the information for the world's helping. It is as though a would-be hero should spend a lifetime training to become the most valiant member of a life-saving crew and, in his anxiety to learn everything to be known about

storms, life-boats, signals and resuscitations, he should never find time to join his comrades in the actual work of rescuing shipwrecked people. Students of that class naturally settle into the study rut and the real, living, theosophical movement sweeps past them and is lost. To be of any real value to a person Theosophy must be *lived,* not merely intellectually comprehended, and it is in order to live it to the uttermost, that the student should seek to blend precept and practice in an ideal life.

Becoming completely absorbed in business or in one's studies, while surrounded by all the opportunities presented by the physical plane life, is much like going to an opera and then reading a newspaper while the performance goes on unnoticed. The life we are now living gives admirable opportunities for balanced development, and it is just the things to which we do not naturally take that may be most in need of attention. The person who has a strong tendency to give most of his time to amusements can clearly improve matters by turning some attention to study; and no less certainly can the one who is wholly absorbed in study give some time to other things, to his great profit. The improvement of the intellect is important, but by no means *the* important thing in life. The cultivation of sympathy, of compassion, is tremendously more important to the student of occultism, and yet it is precisely the thing that we seldom think of as requiring systematic development. We have many methods and countless contrivances for developing the intellect but we leave the heart qualities to take

care of themselves, and to grow in any vague and indefinite way that may come about.

It is quite as possible to cultivate compassion as to cultivate the intellect, but it requires to be done with attention and systematic effort. The necessity for it must first be recognized and the mind be turned resolutely to the subject. This is the first step toward breaking up the self-centered absorption that makes us oblivious of the struggling brothers beside us on life's highway. Then one begins to observe more and more the difficulties and the life-problems of those about him. And as he looks and listens his sympathy grows strong.

THE CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

One of the essentials in spiritual progress is the giving out of what is received. Without such giving there can be no healthy growth. There may be the accumulation of certain knowledge, but it will prove as worthless to its possessor, who relies upon that to carry him through, as gold would be to a man perishing alone in the desert, where all his life-long accumulations of money would avail him nothing—could not procure him a crust of bread nor a single drop of water. No, spiritual growth can never come of the accumulation of occult information—of probing into the secrets of nature and adding one fact to another until the possessor feels that he is well versed in mystic lore. To grow spiritually means to live more vividly, to have a greater life capacity. To accumulate much knowledge and to make spiritual progress are two very different things. It is

not facts we need so much as capacity to live, to love, to know the joy that we are now unable to comprehend. An infant a week old has five senses and is equipped with motor and sensory nerves; but it has not yet developed to that stage of its physical existence in which they are available for the enjoyment of a more abundant life than that which it is living. Therefore it cannot live the wider, keener life of the healthy adult who finds manifold pleasures in physical existence. It cannot even comprehend that wider life. The difference is merely one of *capacity to live.* Still greater is the difference between the man who is spiritually undeveloped and the one who has evolved the capacity to know the higher joys of the universe. One is a spiritual infant, with inherent but dormant faculties. The other is the spiritual adult, whose developed faculties give him a capacity to live and enjoy life in a way that is as little comprehended by the ordinary man of the world as the pleasures of literature, art and music are unknown to the infant in its cradle. The baby inhabits the same world as the adult and precisely the same sights and sounds are about him, but he has not as yet the capacity to appropriate them. In the very house he inhabits there may be libraries of choice literature, the art treasures of exquisite beauty, while some master musician thrills all who listen with divinest harmonies; but they simply have no existence for the infant because he has not the capacity for a life so full and rich. Ability to receive, to respond to that which exists, is the measure of one's life.

To grow spiritually is to develop one's latent

capacities, to enlarge the horizon of consciousness and to come into accord with the life-stream that pulses through the universe. It is not a process of accumulating information, or accumulating anything; but rather of getting rid of the impediments that obstruct the life-stream—that compel the universal life-tide to flow around us instead of through us.

To get spiritual knowledge and keep it, instead of being the method of spiritual growth, is one of the impediments that shut out the life-current. A truth discovered should become a truth promulgated. Pass on the thought if you would receive more. Treasure no spiritual knowledge as a personal possession if you would not be cut off from the source of wisdom. One grows most, spiritually, when the life-stream flows freely through him to others. One who seeks to have and to hold is like a pond without an outlet, covered with its green slime of impurity. He represents spiritual stagnation. One who receives and gives again is like a lake from which springs a noble stream to quench the thirst of parching fields beyond. Such a lake is to the pond what sunshine is to shadow—what health is to disease. The pond is not without a certain phase of life. In its putrid waters swarm myriads of animalculae and from its reeking surface arise the effluvia of fever. It is a noxious sort of life—the individual life turned inward upon itself. There can be no true life without outward activity. Life and activity are inseparable. The ocean is the antithesis of the stagnant pond. What the ocean receives from the countless rivers it gives back to the skies. It is the

eternal rebuke of both selfishness and inaction. Its ceaseless tide and currents are the rhythmic pulse of health. From the land it receives, purifies and returns the gift. The miserly pond becomes stagnant in a week—the generous ocean never.

The stream must flow through the mind, not stop there, if spiritual growth is to begin and continue. Ways must be found of handing on the gift, of letting the light shine, of being an instrument for the illumination of others. No person can get something for nothing (although he may foolishly believe he can) or get help without helping. If he has already had some light it only signifies that he had a claim upon nature that has thus been paid. It may have been established without thought of what was occurring, but it was due him and payment was inevitable and as natural as the rising of the sun or the coming of the summer. But the fact that some light and help have come does not prove that they will continue if they are received as a matter of course and thought of as a personal possession that concerns nobody else. To the universe every soul is important and one cannot be more important than another. Why, then, should anybody imagine that spiritual truth is for *him* rather than for the scores who can receive it through him?

There are some games that reverse the common rule of procedure and the winner is held to be he who can first get rid of all the points he holds. And so it is with things spiritual. Progress is by reversal of the common rule of procedure of the physical world. It is not by grasping but by giving that we get more,—that we finally win. Only by the process

of giving can the aspirant gain. He cannot get the full benefit of a spiritual truth until he has given it to others. The more he gives the richer he becomes. He cannot pass knowledge on to others without getting more wisdom from it himself. The effort to enlighten others increases his own illumination, and the more he gives the more he gets. His very forgetfulness of himself in the work of helping others makes the conditions that insure his rapid progress.

Of course one should never become a nuisance by talking Theosophy to anybody and everybody in season and out. Judgment and discrimination must guide him. There are people to whom Theosophy can be explained with as little profit as one can urge the beauties of the landscape upon his horse. The majority of people can no more receive Theosophy in the abstract and shape their lives by its precepts than a savage can see the necessity of railways and libraries. As the savage must evolve a long way before he even understands what civilization is, so most people must pass through much bitter experience before they begin to see the purpose of physical existence at all and to understand that there is such a thing as a life that is not centered in material things and material pursuits. But certain it is that in almost every community there are a few people who can receive Theosophy as a philosophy of life, as the science of the soul, while almost everybody can receive it indirectly; that is, accept something of its principles when they are not labeled "Theosophy," and when they are unaccompanied by any effort to induce them to accept a new and

strange view of existence that suddenly upsets all their established ideas. There are always opportunities everywhere to give some light to others, for all are struggling with their personal problems; and if we see that we cannot give to one who is groping in the dark the light of the entire philosophy, we can usually at least give him a suggestion that will help. Suppose, for example, that one's friend has a grievance against somebody and blindly and foolishly determines to "get even," and nurses his wrath against a hoped-for day of vengeance. We can at least declare our belief in the folly of such a course and express admiration for the magnanimity that can ignore personal affront. We can always talk tolerance where there is narrowness, justice where there is oppression and mercy where there is cruelty. Without dogmatically arguing our beliefs we can quietly let it be known that we are Theosophists, when it is appropriate to the occasion, and modestly but unhesitatingly champion the truth as we see it when the opportunity occurs. Most important of all, we can constantly be in that helpful frame of mind that is always ready to give freely to others all the light that we have been given; and that is a step toward the goal of perfect illumination.

CONQUERING DELUSIONS

As the student of occultism gets fairly into his work he will find that his viewpoint is gradually changing and that old ideas are being replaced by newer and truer ones. Ultimately he will discover that he has been living in the midst of delusions

and mistaking them for realities. One part of his work now is to conquer the delusions and come into a realization of the truth that is hidden by outward appearances. To acquire the ability to distinguish between the apparent and the real is a stupendous task, for only when human evolution is finished can such discrimination be perfect. But the searcher for occult truth can take a step that will start him on the way, and that is the important thing now. To this end he may begin with an effort to master the illusion that the physical body is himself. We are so used to identifying the self with the body from our very infancy that to separate the two in thought even for a moment is at first nearly impossible, and yet it must be done. To fully realize that the body is as much an instrument of the self as the hand is, or as one's pen is, constitutes one of the first steps in occult progress. We have before us the work of freeing ourselves from delusions and this one that leads us to think of the body as the self is a starting point in the task. When it is accomplished we shall have made a most encouraging forward step that will lead to success in more difficult ones.

There are various ways in which we can gradually acquire the feeling that the body is not at all the self, but only a thing we use for our convenience. One useful way is to keep in mind the fact that the body is a mere aggregation of matter that has no *permanent* relationship to the self; that this aggregation of physical matter is constantly changing; and it is always coming and going and is never the same for even a few days at a time. Some parts of it are replaced with new matter more slowly

than others, but within a very few years (the seven years suggested by some physiologists is now said to be much too long for the facts) the entire body will be replaced by new matter. To put it differently, the physical body a person has today will, in a short time, have been returned to the elements of which it is composed, while matter that is now widely scattered over the earth will, by that time, be fashioned into a physical body he is yet to have. As a matter of scientific fact, from birth to death we have several different aggregations of physical atoms which constitute our physical body but the process of their coming and going is so gradual and imperceptible that we do not realize it. Nevertheless the quantity of matter that a man uses as a body, in the course of a long life—the matter which the average man regards as himself—will amount to more than a ton. A very little thought will show anybody the folly of identifying that ton of matter as himself! It is only a quantity of matter brought together to build a working instrument for the self, as the matter in the pen has been fashioned into a different instrument for the use of the self; only in the case of the body the matter has not all been used at one time. If the student will remember that the self, with all its memories, is unaffected by this constant change in the physical body; that it really has no permanent relationship whatever to the body, which from the viewpoint of science is but a whirling, shifting mass of matter, the delusion that he is the body will begin to lose its power over his mind. Think continually of the body as merely a changing aggregation of atoms, forming, reforming,

disappearing, while the self is permanent, enduring and independent, temporarily using the physical body but ready when the time comes to step entirely aside from it, to use it no longer, to return to it no more.

It is not easy to think of the self as separated from the familiar form we know, and here the student of Theosophy will be helped by the fact that the astral body is a duplicate of the physical form. Remembering that the astral is a degree nearer reality than the physical region he can think of the astral body as representing the self and thus, in thought, separate himself from the physical body and picture the self with all its attributes and powers being expressed in the higher vehicles, wholly independent of the mass of matter called the physical body. Of course he cannot stop there. It is but a beginning. The time will come when he must separate the self from the astral body also, and from the mental body as well. The thing he may really do with good results is to go as far up as the causal body in his thought of separating the self from its vehicles. He should always think of these invisible vehicles, or bodies, as being composed of matter that freely interpenetrates the physical body as water saturates a sponge. He should keep it always in mind that man is a wonderfully complex being and that the various bodies he inhabits are but sections of the complex whole, each playing a distinct part in the total of life functions. Perhaps it may help him to remember the complexity of the physical body, considered by itself. It, alone, is composed of various grades of matter, each of them being a sec-

tion of the physical body and giving us an outline of it. There is, first, the dense matter of the bones. They are the frame-work for the rest and give us the body in outline, but the skeleton is not the body. Then there is a different grade of matter which we call flesh. It also represents the form of the body but it is far from being the whole body. Then we have the nerves. If a diagram of the nervous system were made, with each nerve in its proper place, we should have again a perfect outline of the human form. But these nerves are not the body,—only a section of it performing a distinct office. Then there is also the fluid which we call the blood. If it could be suddenly stopped in its circulation, instantly frozen, and all of the particles in the capillaries were to remain where they were at the instant that circulation was suspended while all the rest of the matter of the body should, by some magic, vanish, we would still have the human form perfectly outlined by the blood that circulates in it. Yet because the blood outlines the human form it is not the body. It is only another section of the complex whole known as the physical body. It requires all these sections, and requires them all interlaced and performing different functions, to constitute the physical body.

It is no more erroneous to think of any one of these different sections of the body, each with its specific work to do, as being the physical body than to think of any one of the bodies of man as being the man. Just as all these grades of physical matter, each carrying forward its particular set of activities from birth to death, are required to make up the

physical body, to constitute the mechanism through which the man functions on the physical plane, so are the different bodies through which we function in the various planes required to express the whole range of the ego's activities in the three worlds in which we simultaneously exist. The physical, the astral, the lower mental and the causal bodies, should be thought of as four separate parts or sections of one complex whole, but not as the man himself; the ego, the self, being the individualized portion of the universal consciousness functioning through them all.

Another way in which one can achieve some degree of success in freeing oneself from delusions is to remember that the physical senses are very unreliable interpreters of facts and that in the simplest of things they mislead us. The physical senses tell us that the earth is stationary and that the sun, as well as the moon, moves about it. We have to fall back upon our reason, make mechanical measurements and careful comparisons of various facts, before we can free ourselves from this particular deception of the physical senses; and many people never do get free from it. If we look at a straight log that lies on the bank of a stream with one end submerged in the clear water, the eye reports to us that the log is bent at the point where it enters the water. If two trains are standing side by side and we are on one while the other begins to move slowly the eye falsely reports to the consciousness that our own train is moving. If we cross the first and second fingers of the hand and then roll a marble back and forth beneath the finger tips the sense of

touch falsely informs us that there are two marbles instead of one. Many facts and experiences may be cited to show the utter unreliability of the testimony of the physical senses. The student should keep it steadily in mind that just as we are thus misled by the physical senses in these matters so we are deceived by them in other and more important affairs; and just as one may hold the mental picture of the earth being spherical and moving about the sun until the idea of its being flat and stationary becomes unnatural and absurd, so can he think the truth about the interpenetrating relationship of the various bodies in which he functions until the old delusions disappear and trouble him no longer. The physical body becomes to him in reality an instrument that he is using, a vehicle in which he is moving about and through which he communicates with others in his daily activities. Slowly but surely the fact becomes established in his consciousness, and he has taken an important step in discrimination between the real and the unreal.

FAULTS TO BE GUARDED AGAINST

When a person who comes into the study of Theosophy begins to see its power and beauty in re-shaping the lives of those who endeavor to practice its precepts, it is not strange that he should become enthusiastic in his efforts to interest others in it, or that he should develop a strong feeling of partisanship for it.

But in this direction lies a subtle danger—the danger of becoming dogmatic and thus stifling spir-

itual growth. Whoever falls into that error has interfered with his own progress. It is true that Theosophy is a study of life so comprehensive in its sublime reach that it includes the fundamental principles of all religions; but this very fact should teach the student tolerance, rather than give him a feeling that Theosophy is the only thing needed for the salvation of the world. It should not be forgotten that until a person has reached a certain point in human evolution Theosophy can do nothing for him —cannot even arrest his attention—and that he reaches that particular point in his development through some of the religious or philosophical movements from which he finally graduates into Theosophy. Therefore the organized moral and intellectual movements of various kinds that fill the world bear somewhat the relationship to Theosophy that private and public schools of all descriptions bear to the university. For a student of occultism to assume the attitude which indicates a belief that Theosophy is a thing to supplant all religious denominations—that it is the one and only thing required by humanity—would be much like insisting that all common schools be raised tomorrow to the university level. One of the really beautiful things about Theosophy is its breadth and tolerance; and it is only when its devotees shape their course by that spirit of tolerance that progress is possible for them. Theosophy is not a thing that requires partisanship. It wins its way by its inherent reasonableness, not by the vehemence with which it is urged.

The disposition to too strongly argue the benefits of Theosophy is an error to be avoided. We have

only to observe one orthodox religionist arguing the superiority of his denomination to all others to know how ineffective it is with his opponent, who is equally sure of the superiority of *his* faith. Neither of them is learning anything. Each is only wondering why the other insists upon using more than his share of the time! Now, the student of occultism should never permit himself to drop into that antagonistic mental condition. *It is an attitude that closes the mind to truth.* The reverse of that mental condition should be characteristic of the earnest student. He should always be receptive to truth. He should, indeed, be always eagerly alert for a new idea, for a new point of view from which to look at any particular fact. He should not be as one who has a certain doctrine to defend and is always suspicious of any new fact or idea, his first feeling being a fear that it may endanger his belief. One's first thought should not be "Does this new idea support my theory?" but "Is it true?" It is only by such an attitude of mind that truth can be recognized when it is encountered and the student of occultism is, above all things, a truth seeker. He has nothing to fear about any possible antagonism between his belief and the facts. He knows that if there is any apparent disagreement there is something wrong either with his conception of theosophical principles or his understanding of the facts; and he sets to work to think out the solution and adjust himself to the truth. Thus shall he constantly grow in wisdom and understanding.

But there is another fault to be guarded against even more carefully than the inclination toward

militant and dogmatic defense of one's beliefs, and it presents greater difficulties because it lies more deeply rooted within the personality. This is the disposition to resent personal criticism and to defend oneself with such vigor that little or no consideration is given to the criticism. It is the most common (as well as the most personally injurious) course that people take. It is, once more, the mental attitude that closes the mind to truth, and to the very truth that is perhaps most needed. There is an occult maxim that "every contact is an opportunity." It is also true that every contact with another furnishes us a teacher, but that we usually foolishly reject the teaching when it touches our vanity or pride. The true student of occultism is as willing to learn from babes as from sages. He tries to keep an open mind, always at attention, always receptive to truth regardless of the source and regardless of how it may affect him personally. He should not only welcome criticism but should regard the critic as his friend and teacher. If he is wise he will extract a valuable lesson from the criticism. He will think it over calmly and try to get his critic's point of view. If he can see that there was good ground for the criticism he will set to work at once to eliminate the fault on which it was based. If he cannot find cause for the criticism, and reaches the conclusion that it was unjust, he will understand that his own false judgments of others are reacting upon him and will try henceforth to be more careful and considerate.

Undue partisanship of our beliefs shuts out the truth, and dogmatism bars the way to our farther

progress. Foolish sensitiveness about personal criticism likewise closes the mind to truth and may leave us firmly clinging to the very faults that prevent our spiritual development.

THE WRONG ROAD AND THE RIGHT ONE

Old sayings often contain great wisdom. That is why they are old. If they were not the vehicles of wisdom they would have died young. They survive through the centuries because they are successful teachers. Their age is equal to their utility. One of these old maxims should have the respectful consideration of students of occultism. This ancient saying runs like this: "The longest way around is the shortest way home." It is a sage warning against injudicious haste. It is a concise statement of the fact that human experience has demonstrated that it is unwise to take "short cuts" to a given destination instead of following the well established road; and that the desire to save time is liable in the end to lead not only to the loss of time but to invite disaster also.

There is probably no field of activity where this is so true as it is in the study of occultism. The student is likely to be strongly attracted towards psychic development and to find himself ardently desiring to immediately possess the faculty of clairvoyance, and this desire may tempt him to abandon the longer but safer way. It is well to know of the ultimate opening of the inner senses through which one becomes more efficient and useful in the great work of uplifting the race; but it is a sad mis-

fortune to make clairvoyance an end in itself and thus lose sight of more important things in the effort to attain it. Such a desire may tempt the unwary into the by-path of artificial development —and the slough of despond and disaster that lies at the farther end of it. Be content with the upward path, though the hills are rugged and the climbing is slow and difficult. It is the shortest way home.

As a matter of simple fact there are more important things than clairvoyance to be developed by the student of occultism—things tremendously more important. Without them clairvoyance is but a dangerous instrument to possess; with them, the inner faculties will open as a matter of course,— will open as a flower unfolds in the warmth of the sun.

The psychism that dazzles many people and appears so wonderful and desirable—the faculty that enables the psychic to describe another's characteristics, to trace a little of his past and to foretell a few future events—is of extremely small and uncertain value. It is rarely, if ever, under control and direction of the psychic and is no more like the higher clairvoyance used in occult investigation than a flaw in a window-pane that happens to magnify the stars seen through it, is like the astronomer's telescope that sweeps the heavens with scientific accuracy. Such minor psychic faculty does not imply spirituality any more than the ability to hypnotize implies it, and may be possessed by the good or the bad just as intellect is. Perhaps its chief merit lies in the fact that it has served to arouse many people to an interest in occultism and

has impelled them to an investigation that has led them away from materialism.

Even if the new student, at the peril of his health (and also of his life) and at the risk of generating unfortunate karma that may retard his higher development for several incarnations, acquires this lower psychic faculty it will avail him little in added ability to gain knowledge. Lacking the training necessary for accurate observation and interpretation he is as helpless, for all practical purposes, as an uneducated man would be in possession of a chemist's laboratory. He would have reached such minor psychic development only after giving it much time and attention that could have been turned to far better account in another direction where it would have resulted in permanent gain of the greatest value to him. The value of the slight psychic ability that is exhibited by the fortune-telling variety of clairvoyant is very greatly exaggerated. Because a few things are accurately given us we get the erroneous impression that our whole future lies open to the psychic and that he could, with perfect ease, forecast any part of it. At the same time we pay but little attention to the things about which he is altogether in error, so strongly are we impressed with that which is correct. The actual value of this degree of clairvoyance, or of mediumship, as the case may be, is but little, if any, above that of palmistry. The skilful palmist, without possessing a trace of clairvoyance, can read from the open hand nearly as much of the life record of the past, and the life plan of the future, as can a person possessed of this minor psychic de-

velopment, and with less liability of error. Of course the psychic gets a somewhat different class of facts, a little more of detail, perhaps, than the skilled palmist, yet nothing more remarkable and certainly not of greater accuracy or value than the capable palmist is able to give.

With nothing of real value to gain, but with the possibility of losing much in the effort to acquire that uncertain and impermanent little, it is clearly enough a foolish thing to give time and energy to such development. Many persons have tried this supposed "shorter way" to their sorrow, and by a certain kind of peculiar breathing exercise, or other method, have succeeded in gaining astral sight and also in wrecking the nervous system and destroying health and happiness for the remainder of this life. Sometimes it happens that by such artificial development astral sight is gained on the lower levels of the astral region, only for the experimenter to find to his horror that he cannot then control it and must, against his will, remain conscious of unpleasant things. He finds, when it is too late, that he has made haste unwisely and has done worse than merely waste time. He has not only failed to find what is truly the shortest way home but he may easily entangle himself in difficulties that may prove a handicap on the right road when he finally comes to a realization of his error and resolves to set out properly on the forward journey.

But what is this longer way around that is really the shortest way home? It is the development of the spiritual nature, and it is only apparently the longer way on account of the delusion regarding

the supposed shorter one. This method instead of dealing with psychism gives its attention entirely to spirituality; and instead of regarding the present life as the field of operations its outlook is from the viewpoint of the ego's general and continuous welfare, and necessarily extends over many lives. In other words it takes into consideration the whole of the journey instead of a little fragment of it and refuses to sacrifice the welfare of the future to the whim of the present. And just here is one of the points that the student should keep always in mind, —the necessity of thinking of more than one incarnation at a time, for if he did only that his plans for his development would thus be greatly limited and narrowed. He should try to free himself from the idea that death is in any way the end of the program and endeavor to accustom himself to the thought that it is merely an incident, a change, as finishing a given task or retiring for an afternoon nap is a change in the day's routine. He should keep it steadily in mind that there is no death; that there are only various states of consciousness and that one who is following out a consistent plan of evolutionary development may carry it along from life to life, thus moving forward with constantly accelerating speed. He should think of, and plan for, the far away future,—never alone for the few years that may perhaps remain of the present incarnation.

With a view then to permanent, instead of temporary results, let the attention be turned to the work of spiritual development, to the elimination of one's undesirable characteristics, to the purification of the lower nature, to the task of bringing the whole of

the activities of the waking consciousness into harmony with the loftiest ideals one can conceive. This is the apparently longer way around which is really the short and sure way home. On this road we may travel as rapidly as we choose. The rapidity of our progress will depend entirely upon the earnestness and the energy put into the work and when the right time comes, or, speaking more accurately, when the right inner condition is attained, astral sight will come as a natural result and be a blessing instead of a curse.

One thing that the aspirant for spiritual development should never forget is that he does not work alone. He probably will, for a considerable time, be unconscious of the fact that any other being in the universe has the slightest interest in his efforts. And this is well; for one of the lessons he is learning is to stand alone and persevere. But the fact is that every aspiration is known and every effort is observed. Just as much help is given as the aspirant is able to receive, and long before he knows it in his waking consciousness the earnest student is, during the hours of sleep, receiving instruction on the inner planes. Without such help spiritual progress would be practically impossible; and an extremely important thing to remember is that we can get help only as we deserve it. Now, we deserve it in proportion that we give it; and this is why it is that to "forget oneself in the service of others" is a wiser course than to give time and energy to developing psychic faculties for our own satisfaction that are of no real value to anybody. Some of us have heard it said by others farther along

on the road that "it is precisely when we are thinking least about ourselves that we are making the greatest progress." Try hard to be useful, to deserve much, rather than to secure entertaining faculties for the personal satisfaction it may give.

While the development of clairvoyance is so attractive to many we seldom hear questions asked about how to develop intuition,—a matter of very much greater importance. Developing the intuition is a process of illuminating the lower personality with the light of the higher self and it comes about by pure living and lofty thinking. Intuition is from a high level of the inner worlds—from the source of wisdom—and it is the ability of rising to such spiritual heights, of bringing into the physical consciousness such unerring insight, that the student of occultism should strive for instead of trying to develop psychic faculties. When the art of thus controlling and purifying thought and desire is attained the awakening of the spiritual powers will follow. "All things come to him who waits"—and works.

TOLERANCE

The cultivation of a broad tolerance is necessary for one who would make both intellectual and moral progress. Intolerance fetters the soul. It erects barriers between us and others and clouds the vision instead of illuminating the understanding. It limits our opportunities and narrows our field of experience. Experience is the great teacher—the master instructor in the evolutionary school. It is through experience that we evolve, that we reach the

higher stages of development. The difference between the ignorant, uncouth and depraved, and the enlightened, refined and noble, is the result of thought and emotion working on the experiences that arouse them. Thought and experience, acting and reacting on each other, are the great character builders. At a lower stage of evolution the experience arouses thought and we get a lesson we did not seek by making mental deductions from the experience, as for example, when one has thoughtlessly gone out on a cold day without adequate clothing and suffered in consequence and, reflecting upon it afterward, learns at least a little in the development of caution. At a higher stage of evolution thought takes precedence and we deliberately search out that within us which needs strengthening and as deliberately seek the experience required to develop the desired virtue, as when, after deciding that we are deficient in compassion we set about cultivating it by visiting the sick and the bereaved. But whether experience comes first or last it is an indispensable factor in human progress and soul development, and whatever restricts our experience delays our evolution.

While religious intolerance is a very pronounced form of this vice—a term none too strong for a thing so detrimental to human welfare—we should not forget that, in one form or another, there is more intolerance in the average person and, indeed, even in the fairly liberal and progressive man, than most of us would be willing to admit. In many directions this deadly moral nightshade extends its branches. There is race intolerance, national intol-

erance, class intolerance and, insidious and far-reaching in its evil effects, the more common form of intolerance which we know as self-righteousness, that leads us to place false emphasis on the weaknesses of others and remain blind to our own. Many people have passed the point where they have any prejudice against a person because he is of another race and color; have reached the degree of enlightenment that enables them to look upon a man of another nationality as they regard a fellow countryman; have learned to feel no prejudice against another because he is of a different class or of a higher or lower walk of life, as the case may be; have reached the degree of understanding that enables them, no matter what their own station is, to see all people as one; to look with an impartial eye upon the richest and the poorest, the learned and the ignorant, as different members of the universal family, each entitled to the most courteous consideration;—many people are able to do this, and yet when it comes to dealing with various grades of moral weaknesses they exhibit a self-righteous intolerance that is a bar to spiritual progress. There are certain forms, or classes, of moral weaknesses with which they will have nothing to do and toward their unfortunate brothers and sisters afflicted with these moral flaws they assume an attitude of lofty disdain. Many a man who is broad-minded and progressive regards a thief or a degenerate as being beyond the pale of consideration, while many a liberal and sympathetic woman regards her fallen sister with equal intolerance and draws her skirts aside as she passes with frank contempt. And so

it is that thousands of us who are swift to condemn the intolerance of religious bigotry are still blind to the fact that we are, ourselves, equally intolerant when it comes to matters of a different sort.

Now, it is when we have conquered intolerance in its commoner forms and are ready for the higher work of overcoming the subtler variety, that great spiritual lessons can come to us through the very people against whom, through our intolerance, we are closing the gates of our sympathy. If we do not erect the barrier of intolerance and thus completely separate ourselves from them—if we do not thus limit our field of experience by our foolish prejudice—we shall find that from the sympathetic consideration we give them will spring a wider wisdom than we now possess. The great work that lies before every evolving soul is nothing less than the comprehension of life in all its forms and varieties, the understanding of the universe and the acquirement of compassion; and every barrier that stands in the way of that must be broken down. To have sympathy, to understand moral weakness, is not to condone wrong doing.

To permit any lingering intolerance to narrow and blind us in our spiritual unfoldment would be something like the blunder of a man who desires to be a great painter harboring such prejudice against a certain color that he would have nothing to do with it. He would thus be shutting out a factor in his artistic development that would be absolutely fatal to his ultimate success and all his work would be marred and his progress in art would be barred by that foolish prejudice until he got rid

of it. Red may not be as pleasing a color as blue, but both are equally the result of the division of a pure white ray of light by a prism and each is essential to the harmony of colors. Even so is every human personality the result of trying to manifest inherent divinity through the medium of matter, and its differing expressions must be studied and understood before we can comprehend the harmony of the whole.

Between intolerance and self-righteousness there is a most intimate relationship and the highest of spiritual authorities have pointed out the subtle evil that lurks therein. Perhaps many good people will never cease wondering about the utterances of the Christ as He rebuked the Pharisees and mingled with the publicans and sinners, declaring the latter to be much nearer the kingdom of heaven than the self-righteous. But to the student of occultism this truth must be as clear as the sunlight. A feeling of separateness is the sin of sins and the most difficult to overcome. The sinners from whom the self-righteous drew back in horror doubtless had the heart side of their natures much more highly evolved than their haughty critics had, and although they were at the moment showing forth a moral weakness to be condemned, they would, in the natural course of things, evolve out of that much more quickly than those who looked upon them with intolerant contempt would be able to get rid of *that* flaw. To put the case differently it was just because this particular class of sinners represented a lower form of iniquity than self-righteousness that the public was able to recognize it as a sin, and it was precisely

because self-righteousness is a more subtle (and therefore more dangerous) form of iniquity that the people did not recognize it as a sin at all.

Why is intolerance such a dangerous thing? For one reason because by placing undue emphasis on the fault against which the line of exclusion is drawn without mercy or consideration, we become blind to the good qualities of which no human being is destitute, and thus ignore the very thing for which we should always be searching and which we should emphasize and encourage. We permit the one bad quality to hypnotize us, so to speak, by steadily regarding it until our moral judgment is unbalanced, as a man gazes at a black spot on a white wall until certain muscles are fatigued, and hypnosis is induced. Even so do the intolerant paralyze perception and become blind to the good that exists in the least attractive of human beings.

The remedy for intolerance is to remember that all life is one; that those about us are literally ourselves in other forms and that at a high point on the inner planes consciousness is a unit. We are individuals and yet we are one, as the fingers are separate and yet one in consciousness, so that one of them cannot suffer without affecting the one consciousness that directs all. The body is no more the self than one finger is the hand. The universal Self is being expressed through many forms, each of which expresses but a fragment of the one consciousness, and if one of these apparently separate selves regards another with self-righteous intolerance a subtle injury is done which is somewhat

analogous to the wound one finger might inflict upon the other.

A helpful method in eliminating intolerance, in breaking down the separating walls, is to deliberately search for the good in everything and everybody; to remember that there is *nobody* who does not embody some virtue. The good and the bad, or strength and weakness, are mingled in all. The distinction is that the weaknesses differ in the manner of their expression. Some weaknesses are more unpopular than others, that's all; and that is what determines the moral code. One robs a stranger but would defend his friends with his life. Another breaks no law, but would sneak away at the first sign of danger to himself and leave his friends to perish. One gives way to the lust of drunkenness, but is always the friend of other people. Another is a model of sobriety but will meanly spread the gossip of his friend's shame. One is quick in temper and engages in a street brawl, but a moment later shakes hands with his antagonist. Another would do nothing so disgraceful, but when offended bullies and insults the timid in a way that satisfies his anger and proves his cowardice. And so it goes throughout the whole list of human weaknesses. Some classes of faults are more unpopular than others largely because they are more on the surface; and, as a rule, those who are most intolerant of the frailties of others are precisely those who, in other directions, are morally lame themselves. But there is good in all; even in the intolerant!

Tolerance is a noble virtue, and a cornerstone in the temple not built with hands. Upon it must

rest other virtues to be acquired. Tolerance precedes enlightenment as the dawn precedes the day. It dispels the darkness of our ignorance about others and illuminates the road that leads to peace. It is the gateway to universal brotherhood. Without tolerance there can be no justice. With tolerance there can be no cruelty. It is the herald of mercy and the prophecy of dawning compassion.

PURITY

Purity is a word that signifies much in occultism. We encounter it often, for there can be no spiritual progress that does not reckon with it. A striving after purity is one of the absolute essentials to higher development. There can be no real spiritual illumination without it, no matter what other qualifications may be possessed.

The essential difference between a spiritual person and the man of the world is that the latter lives largely in his physical senses. At a low point in evolution—the savage state—he lives altogether in the physical senses. He is completely dominated by physical desires, passions and emotions. It is the triumph of matter. As evolution goes forward, as experience is multiplied by successive incarnations, the mentality asserts itself and finally becomes the center in which he lives, mental pleasures gradually outweighing the physical. Ultimately spiritual joys will rise triumphant over both; but for a long period the man is slowly rising from one stage to the other, with the new and higher dawning in him while the old and lower still hold him firmly. When

he comes into a realization of the fact that he can work intelligently with nature in hastening his own evolution, and turns his attention to a definite method of doing it, he enters into a contest with his lower nature, the duration of which is dependent upon his earnestness no less than upon his will power.

At the point where the aspirant for higher things awakens to the fact that the old life of sensation is an undesirable slavery, realizes dimly that something better lies above and beyond it, and resolves to attain it, he is likely to be surprised at the strength of the old fetters which hold him back. There are certain appetites of which he would gladly be rid but they assert themselves at intervals with astonishing vigor. There are passions he thought dead which he finds were only sleeping. There are impulses he believed were under control but they flash out without the slightest warning and throw him off balance. There are certain classes of undesirable thoughts that he hoped to have done with forever but they leap into his mind in spite of him.

Why is it that with the perfectly pure motive of rising above the lower nature, with the sincere desire for a loftier life, and with an earnest effort to achieve it, we do not promptly succeed? When we intellectually comprehend that the change is necessary to our happiness, and most devoutly desire its consummation, why is a prolonged struggle necessary to accomplish it? Because the difficulty is not in ourselves at all but in the bodies we live in. The self has resolved upon the higher life. The ego has succeeded in impressing the physical conscious-

ness — in arousing a longing to escape from the thraldom of the lower nature. But the bodies are to be reckoned with and they cannot be changed in a day. They are the seat of what is commonly called "sin,"—the fortress of the lower nature; and that fortress cannot be carried by assault. It can be taken only by siege.

The progress of purification is a process of changing the matter that composes the physical body and its invisible counterparts, as actually and literally as one would reconstruct a house, making it into a totally different habitation. The very desire to attain the higher life begins the reconstruction. But just as one could not instantly raze his house and as instantly rebuild it, but could effect any desired change by taking the necessary time, so any change that we are capable of imagining can be made in ourselves within a reasonable period. We cannot unbuild in a few days what we have been so long in building. Our battle is against the automatism that we have created. The matter of the astral body has long been accustomed to act in a certain way under certain circumstances and it continues to do it, for a long time, in spite of all our genuine desires to the contrary. If a man has long given way to great anger on slight provocation, and resolves to do so no more, his good resolution will help a little toward his some-time self-mastery; but when the good resolution is followed by sudden and unexpected provocation the astral body responds before he is aware what is happening. So, too, with the mental body. However much he may desire to be pure in mind an impure thought that has often been

harbored in the past will flash in when some connecting thought or old association opens up the way. Of course the astral and mental bodies work together, desire and thought being inextricably mingled and interwoven, and the purification of both goes forward together.

While the purification of the lower nature is not an instantaneous process and is likely to be attended with some temporary failures in the efforts to live up to one's ideal, the final triumph is certain if there is reasonable persistence and earnestness, together with some knowledge of how to proceed. There should be no feeling of an effort to escape from something undesirable and degrading. The mind should not be turned in that direction at all. It should be kept busy in the opposite direction—should be occupied with pure and lofty thinking. There should be no mental effort to crush out the old order of things. Let it be *crowded out* by thoughts of the opposite nature. To set the mind determinedly against a certain objectionable thing is only to give that thing new vitality and invite it to battle. Nonresistance has its value here as elsewhere. "Let sleeping dogs lie."

Another helpful thing to remember is that association and environment are important factors. Suppose a man is trying to overcome a certain thing—the desire for liquor or tobacco; and what is true of these will apply to all other desires of the lower nature. He may escape them for a time and almost believe that they are dead when some old association will arouse them again. Environment is a thing to be taken into account. Until one has grown strong

enough to touch elbows with old temptations and remain absolutely unmoved it is wise to keep as far from them as possible. A man who is fighting the drink habit need not increase his difficulties by living next door to a bar. One who is trying to purify his mind can keep away from certain classes of much advertised plays in which the public desire for the salacious is gratified under the mask of dramatic art of a high order. It is remarkable what vitality the desires of the lower nature have, how tenaciously they cling and how subtly they masquerade in attractive disguises. Art is invoked to refine them and wit is used to adorn them and keep them alive in clever song and apt story.

Every person has his varying moods. There are times when we feel spiritually very strong and easily dominate the lower nature. But there are other times when materiality rises against us in its might and we feel the very near danger of losing our balance and being swept from our footing in the tide of reaction. In such moments of peril a definite course of action is useful. The Christian prays, which draws his mind away from lower things to the higher. The occultist can think steadily of the Masters of Compassion, or of the Christ, all of whom he regards as embodying all that is pure and exalted.

To succeed well in dominating the lower nature the danger of permitting the mind to turn for even a moment to impure thoughts and things should be well understood. Any sort of dallying is fatal and safety lies only in turning the mind *instantly* in the other direction when the old thoughts and impulses crowd upon us. This is repeatedly em-

phasized in such invaluable occult works as *The Voice of the Silence:*

"Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. * * * Beware, disciple, suffer not e'en though it be their shadow to approach."

And again:

"One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind will drag thee down, and thou wilt have to start the climb anew."

To be pure is to be strong. Purity and spiritual strength are inseparable. In proportion that the lower nature dominates a man's life he is both physically and mentally weak, as well as morally weak. The physical, mental and moral are so inextricably interwoven that each necessarily reacts upon the others. None of them can stand alone because they are really a blended whole, gaining or losing together. There must be purity and strength for all. Purity, then, is literally the way to strength, to power, and to illumination.

TRUTHFULNESS

Truthfulness, like purity, is one of the absolute essentials to occult progress. Whoever would know the truth must be truthful. We cannot comprehend reality until we are, ourselves, sound and true and genuine to the heart's center.

The average man of the world little realizes the extent of his falsity. He thinks falsely, acts falsely and speaks falsely, with little thought that he is doing anything wrong. He habitually represents himself to be different from what he really is. He always tries to give the impression that he is better

than he knows himself to be. His life among others is a perpetual masquerade. To prevent others knowing the truth about him he cheerfully lies whenever he thinks it necessary as a part of the program of concealment. He acts as well as talks in a way calculated to mislead people, and brings them to erroneous conclusions about him and his affairs. It never occurs to him that he should, under any circumstances, admit that he has been in the wrong or even that he has made an error of judgment. If his quarrel with another has become known he takes great pains to show that it was entirely the fault of his enemy. If he has circulated a story detrimental to another, and later finds it to be untrue, instead of setting it right, as far as he can, he too often thinks only of justifying his criticism by trying to find some other damaging facts about his victim to help show the probability, at least, of his first statement being reasonable! In any event he will not permit anybody to think that *he* is in any way to blame for any trouble that exists, and whenever he is connected with any controversy or difficulty with others he insists upon ignoring that axiom of nature that there are always two sides to every question. He fully believes that in thus getting credit for being a better man than he actually is—a person without fault or frailty—he is promoting his own welfare; and if somebody should suggest to him that his truest self-interest could be better served by being perfectly candid and truthful even about himself, he would probably think it very foolish advice. Just like the man, with a different kind of moral weakness, who steals another's

money, he feels certain that he is "getting the best of it," and that the saying "honesty is the best policy" is only a maxim for fools instead of a literal fact in nature. It has never occurred to him that in deceiving others he is bandaging his own eyes, blunting his own perceptions, dulling his own intuition, and that in masking himself he is placing a mask over those very truths of nature which are a necessity to his higher development. It is true that he may lead others to believe him a better man than he is and that for a little span he may strut in his disguise of false-righteousness; but he pays a fool's price for the vain folly, and the law of adjustment, whether in this incarnation or another, will finally bring him the bitter humiliation necessary to arouse him from his false attitude toward life. His account of vanity and humility will finally balance and cancel itself and he will awaken to the fact that his foolish untruthfulness has cost him dearly—that it has retarded his progress in a way that is worse than merely to have remained ignorant of nature's choicest wisdom, though that in itself is misfortune enough.

One of the things that first impresses those fortunate enough to come into touch with teachers of occultism who are direct pupils of the Masters of Wisdom is their painstaking precautions to prevent anybody getting from them a wrong idea about the facts as they are. Thus intense is the feeling of responsibility on the part of those who know the occult results of the slightest misleading of others. The informed occultist instead of ever trying to make himself appear before the world better than

he is, in any trouble with which he might be connected, does not, beyond merely declaring the fact of his innocence, attempt to defend himself *even when entirely blameless.* He knows perfectly well that what people think him to be just now is of extremely small importance, while what he really is is of transcendent consequence. He will set right any erroneous impression if he can without augmenting the trouble, but not for the good opinion and the applause of the whole world would he say or do anything that would be the slightest misrepresentation of the truth. The more one knows about occultism the more scrupulously accurate he must necessarily become in the minutest degree about the most trivial things, for he has learned that only as he lives truth shall he know truth.

Somebody has invented the convenient and comforting phrase, "a white lie." But occultism knows no white lie. It is quite color blind on the subject of falsehood. The essence of untruthfulness is deception and deception is unjustifiable. The manner of accomplishing the deception is wholly immaterial. It may be only by a smile or a facial expression of surprise, but if it misleads it is no less a lie than if plainly put in words. Of course there are impertinent persons who take the liberty of interrogating people about things which are none of their business, but the victim of their inquisitiveness is under no obligation to satisfy their curiosity; still less to take upon himself the misfortune of misstatement in order to avoid their learning facts they have no right to know. There are times when absolute silence is commendable, when one is justified in dis-

regarding a direct question and declining to utter a word on the subject.

Putting aside the more obvious forms of falsification, that scarcely require comment, there remains that which is the more dangerous just because it is less pronounced and is veiled under the conventionalities of polite usage. How easy it is to indulge the pernicious habit of flattering another and saying falsely pleasant things about him in order to be agreeable and to make him friendly! We praise his song or his essay extravagantly when we know well enough that it was only ordinarily good; and in doing that we cultivate his vanity, if he has that very common weakness, and lead him to place a false valuation upon his accomplishments and perhaps to foolishly attempt something for which he is not competent. We often excuse our inclination to flatter with the thought that it is well to stimulate others. The truth is that it would be much kinder to gently criticise our friend's work and help him to appear to better advantage in the future instead of to worse. The truth cannot do him harm if it is tempered with real sympathy and if we are prompted by a genuine desire to help instead of to please.

Our daily social life, also, is full of false standards and is narrowed and bemeaned with petty deceptions; and of course it is as useless as it is false and hollow. Nothing can be worth while that does not in some way promote the welfare of people or living things. The person who would find a satisfactory life must have his every thought and act ring true to the genuine in human nature. He must

acquire again the candor and truthfulness of childhood and cultivate his sympathy to the point that prevents such candor being harsh and brutal. He must continually guard his thoughts, his speech and his acts to see that no shadow of untruthfulness is in any of them. Only he who can live a perfectly open, candid life with no motive disguised and no action cloaked, may hope to reach the very heart of nature's wisdom and comprehend it.

FEARLESSNESS

Fearlessness is something more than courage. A man whom we call courageous may be very far from fearless. A recruit going onto the battle-field for the first time, white-faced but determined, is called a man of courage. Wellington is said to have remarked as a young soldier passed him to the front, pale, trembling but resolute: "There goes a brave man; he realizes the danger, but unhesitatingly faces it." A man may have the courage to move toward a known danger, even to risk his life where there is a strong probability of losing it, and yet be by no means fearless. Perfect freedom from fear marks a high state of development and indicates great knowledge; for, as a matter of fact, fear arises from ignorance.

Chiefly because ignorance is the parent of fear, a man who is courageous in one thing is sometimes an abject coward in another. He may face death a hundred times and come to be quite unconcerned about bullets and shells, and yet he could not be induced to go at night alone to a graveyard. A

French king who died upon the scaffold with such calm courage and dignity as to arouse general admiration had been so lacking in a different kind of firmness as to hasten his own downfall. On the other hand, a notorious outlaw of the early frontier days who was celebrated for his daring, who had killed many people in the various raids and robberies of his band, and who seemed to risk his life as recklessly as though he were a total stranger to fear, nevertheless died in abject terror when he was finally caught and hanged by the *vigilantes.* Some men, courageous in other matters, are filled with fear by the sight of a harmless snake. Others would on no account be present at a materializing seance, while it would be extremely difficult to induce many ordinarily courageous persons to visit alone at night an unoccupied house which was alleged to be "haunted." But all these fears would vanish with a little more knowledge. The graveyard can have no terror for the man who knows that the dead physical body is as much a separate thing from the dead man who once lived in it as his clothing is and that a cemetery is as harmless as a wardrobe. The outlaw about to be deprived of the physical life he had forfeited to the outraged public would not have suddenly turned coward had he not been ignorant of the fact that there is really no death and that while he was losing his physical body he had a better one left. The life ahead of him in the astral world would certainly be an undesirable one; but what probably filled him with fear was the possibility of extinction. The man who is afraid of a materialization, or a ghost, would quickly regain

his courage if he understood a little more about the facts and laws of the invisible world. He would not run from a wraith if he knew it was but a temporary aggregation of matter as harmless as a puff of smoke. We are much amused at a huge elephant going into a paroxysm of terror at sight of a mouse; but it is no more remarkable than the many baseless fears of human beings that arise from various kinds of ignorance.

A study of the action of fear upon the physical body is instructive and even a superficial examination of it shows that it is extremely detrimental in its effects, while courage is of incalculable value to a person. Sudden fear contracts the heart, impedes the circulation of the blood and leaves the face blanched and ashen. We are not surprised when the clairvoyant tells us that the color in which this emotion of fear expresses itself is gray. It is quite in keeping with what we know of its physical effects. The emotion of fear appears to be synonymous with contraction. It is a *lessening* of life, and therefore of vitality — a tendency toward separation from the source of life. Fear is the ally of disease and death. It is destructive, disintegrating. Every physician knows this from experience and always does his best to keep fear from the mind of his patient. He knows that if he can kindle hope and revive courage the battle is more than half won.

Because fear means a restriction of the life-forces, a process of life contraction instead of expansion, it is inimical to soul growth. Only in the atmosphere of serene fearlessness can the inherent divinity come to perfect expression. Any kind or degree of

fear is an enemy of growth and progress; and the kinds and degrees are many. People fear poverty, fear old age, fear accident, fear possible helplessness, fear loss of position, of power, of social standing,—fear even the opinions of others about them. With many people one or another, or several, of these things give rise to a mental condition of perpetual unrest. Ignorance, once more, is the cause of all such fear. The difficulty is in the failure to understand facts—to see things in their correct relationship to each other and thus to realize the harmlessness of things which, seen out of their true relationship, are fear inspiring. A man is afraid of a harmless wraith because he erroneously attaches to it a power it does not possess. Just so are all the rest of his fears groundless, and the objects of them equally powerless to injure him, except through the fear he permits them to inspire in him. To all things over which he worries a man attaches a wholly imaginary power to do him injury and in order to acquire fearlessness he must try to understand nature's methods of evolution and to comprehend why certain unpleasant experiences, such as the unexpected loss of property, accidents on sea or land, friendlessness in old age, etc., come to people. He must come into an understanding of three things: First, that no such experiences can come to any human being unless that person has himself generated the causes that will bring them; second, that when a thing is inevitable it is much less disastrous if calmly faced than if met with paralyzing fear that renders one helpless; and third, that ill-fortune has a lesson to teach that is of more real value to a man

than good fortune could possibly have been in its stead—not that painful things in general are better than pleasant ones, but that they are absolutely necessary to those to whom they come; and were it otherwise they would not, and could not, come to them. A pain in a boy's stomach is not better than the conditions of perfect health, but until he learns better than to eat green apples that pain is giving him a lesson that is necessary for his future health and safety. If a thing is inevitable nothing can be gained by frantically trying to escape it; and if it has a lesson to teach that will enable us to avoid greater suffering later on, it is obviously foolish to lament it.

A wise man once said that there are two classes of things about which he refused to worry. One was the things he could not help and the other the things he could help! It is quite useless to worry about the first and unncessary to worry about the second because they *can* be changed; and so a little common sense puts the demon of worry entirely out of court.

But there is something more to be said about fear than that it arises from ignorance, for its root is in an ignorance that is closely associated with selfishness. "Perfect love casteth out fear"; and there can be perfect love only where there is absolute unselfishness. The man who reaches a knowledge of the actual unity of all life has no fear. Fear and hatred perish together. A man does not fear himself. When he knows that he is one with all that lives he can have neither hatred nor fear of anything nor can anything have fear of him. The

devotee of the orient prays that he may become one who is afraid of nothing and of whom nothing is afraid.

The "perfect love that casteth out fear" also casts out selfishness. A man is no longer thinking about himself but about others. Instead of worrying for fear he will be friendless and helpless in old age he is thinking altogether about how he can help those who are now poor and friendless; and in that very forgetfulness of himself he is creating the conditions that will make his own old age rich with loyal friendships. On the other hand a man who is trying to accumulate money "to provide for old age" may permit his anxiety to secure plenty of it to lead him into the very things that will make a friendless old age certain.

The thoughtful student of cause and effect, as they operate in human evolution, will not be misled by the foolish idea that by increasing his material possessions he can protect himself against any fate he has earned; nor will he waste time worrying about blunders that he may have made in the past and the resulting unpleasantness that may still be ahead, but will meet the inevitable serenely, pondering its lesson when it comes, getting from its severity a Spartan strength and courage and rejoicing that the account now balanced is done with forever. To live in fear of what may be ahead of us as the life-plan unfolds is only to increase whatever misfortune may come and to weaken our powers of resistance at the moment when they are most needed.

To the disciple who has entered fully into the

spiritual life nothing matters. He has reached a clear understanding of the fact that a superior intelligence is superintending his evolution and that all the events of this life, with his future lives, will be adjusted with more careful planning for his welfare than that of a tutor for his pupil or a father for his son; that no useless lesson will be given him, that no unneeded experience can befall him, and that while he may not understand all the events in a program so far-reaching that it includes his evolution on planes of which he is wholly ignorant in his waking consciousness, he has no more cause for fear than an infant has in the arms of its mother. When this view of evolution is fully comprehended one reaches a mental condition that is higher than courage,—the condition that can properly be called fearlessness. It is not the state in which the will is called upon to enable one to resolutely face danger or death. It is rather the state of consciousness that, realizing there is neither danger nor death, is calm and fearless in the presence of both the known and the unknown.

What Theosophy Is

Theosophy is a subject that embraces the universe itself; its philosophy deals with a problem so gigantic as that of the origin and destiny of the human race; also with all existing life and matter and their relationship to each other. But it must not be supposed that it is therefore a philosophy of such

transcendental character that only great minds can comprehend it. Its very universality makes it of vital interest to everybody. While it is true that fully to understand Theosophy would be to comprehend the infinite, its great principles are applicable to every thought and act of every human being and its helpful truths can be as readily used by the humblest person in the lowliest walks of life as by the genius or the philosopher. Mere education gives a man no great advantage over others in the use of theosophical principles, because in occultism, while a keen mind is most helpful, motive is even more important; progress is not so much a question of knowing what the principles are as it is of a desire to apply them, to direct one's life by them. The benefits of Theosophy are within the reach of all.

Theosophy is so many-sided and the wealth of wisdom it can bestow is so great that it is sometimes called a religion, sometimes a philosophy and sometimes a science. Accurately speaking, it is none of these. It is not a religion but an elucidation of the basic principles that underlie all religions. It is not merely a philosophy speculating about the relationship of life to phenomena, for the truths it gives out are matters of fact, positively known. Nor yet is it merely a science of life that seeks to discover causes and trace effects in the ever-changing phenomena of the universe. It is all these in combination, and very much more. In its ethical aspect it is a universal brotherhood, declaring that all life is one. In its scientific aspect it embraces both physical and occult science and takes into

account the facts, the principles and the laws of the invisible world as well as those of the visible.

In dealing with the subject of man's relationship to the universe, it considers the *whole* problem instead of that part of it known only to the physical senses; it gives scientific attention to the spiritual side of the human being as well as to the material.

Theosophy holds that the various great religions are from the same source; that these great religions, coming at different times to different peoples, have been exactly adapted to the stage of evolution and the moral requirements of the people to whom they were given. Theosophy is in perfect harmony with these great religious principles which teach the relationship of men to each other and to God. Theosophy is in harmony both with religion and with science, and it shows that when rightly understood there can be no antagonism between them because they are dealing with two parts of a whole. Science has given attention to material things. Theology has given attention to spiritual things. Theosophy gives attention to both, taking the position that in no other way can we learn the facts about the destiny of the race and understand the process of the soul's evolution.

There are certain facts in the teachings of Theosophy that are of supreme importance because they vitally affect the welfare of every human being. One of these great truths is the immanence of God—the fact that all nature is but an expression of the Supreme Being; that God is not a being apart from life and matter, from men and other creatures; but that which exists *is* God in manifestation; that

every human being is a part of the Supreme Being; every human intelligence a ray of the Supreme Intelligence thrown out from the central Source; in short, that the consciousness of the Supreme Being permeates every atom of matter and that in the most *literal* way we "live and move and have our being" in God.

Another great truth, which naturally follows, is the unity of all life; the truth that each of us is separated from the others only by the matter through which his consciousness functions, while at the source of being we are one, somewhat as fingers are separated by the matter of a glove but at their source are one. In this conception of life we have the basis of universal brotherhood; not a theoretical brotherhood but a literal one in which all human beings are so actually united that when one does an injury to another it must in time react on him as certainly as an injury of one hand by the other causes pain in the consciousness controlling both.

Another of the great truths, the continuity of consciousness, is seen from a viewpoint different from that commonly held. The theosophical view is that there is really no death at all but only changing states of consciousness; that the Self is eternally existent; that the consciousness we know as ourself is but a very partial expression of the ego. In this truth that the self is eternally existent is the basis of immortality—the achievement of immortality being the emancipation of the consciousness from the blinding of matter, so that its own true nature is seen and understood.

Another conception that differs radically from the commonly accepted idea relates to the process of creation. The popular conception is that God created the world and mankind as a mechanic creates a complicated machine—a thing part from himself. On this great central problem of life Theosophy is in perfect agreement with science, showing that creation is the act of God but that His process of creation is an evolutionary one; that the life of the Supreme Being, permeating every atom of the universe, and being partially expressed in the multiplicity of the mineral, vegetable, animal and human forms that fill the world, is slowly evolving into higher and higher powers of consciousness through gradually increasing complexities of form.

Another point where Theosophy and the Church are in agreement about the fact but differ in conceptions of how the fact came to be, is the existence of what in Christianity are called angels and archangels—that is, great spiritual intelligences existing in the universe but not having bodies of matter like our own. Theosophy, instead of holding the idea that such great spiritual intelligences are also sudden creations of God, regards them as all other individualized life is regarded—as the natural products of the evolution of the cosmic life, all life being one, and all being in the process of evolution into higher and higher states of consciousness and spiritual power.

Within recent years the progress of science has revolutionized the ideas about matter and shown the perfect reasonableness of the theosophical teachings of an invisible world that occupies the same space as

the visible world—not a heaven and a hell far away from the earth but all three here, yet completely separated from each other. The space in a bowl can be occupied by a sponge and by water that fills it, because the latter grade of matter interpenetrates the former. In the same way the invisible world exists within, throughout and around the visible world, for its matter is so much more subtle that it is as unaffected by visible matter as water is unaffected by a sieve it flows through. While science knows, thus far, but little of invisible matter, it knows enough of it to confirm the common sense of the theosophical hypothesis that an invisible world of matter, force and life exists within and about the physical world.

Heaven and hell are states of consciousness arising from a man's right or wrong course of life. Punishment for wrong-doing does not come because of the wrath of God but as the natural effect of the forces man himself generates. A cruel or gross life naturally has back of it cruel and gross thoughts and desires. These thoughts and desires have their corresponding effects in matter. They register themselves even in the visible physical matter so that we instantly know a noble face from a depraved one. But their effect in the subtle invisible matter is enormously greater and by every thought and emotion a man is modifying the matter that constitutes his invisible body—a body of matter which, although we do not see it except with clairvoyant sight, surrounds and interpenetrates his physical body from birth to death. If his invisible body comes to be composed chiefly of the grossest invisible matter it confines his

consciousness for a time after physical death to the grossest part of the invisible world; he has earned hell-consciousness and suffers accordingly. But in the degree that his life has been pure and kind he has modified his invisible body by attracting into it the rarer grades of invisible matter, and the corresponding state of consciousness after bodily death results. There are many grades of heaven and hell, as there are degrees of right and wrong.

Theosophy holds that there is evolution of both mind and matter, life and form. What, then, is the process of that evolution? What is the soul and how does it evolve? What is the method by which the human becomes the divine, by which spiritual illumination is reached and immortality becomes a conscious fact?

The soul is the spark of divine life immersed in matter—an individualized portion of the universal consciousness. Through long periods of time it slowly evolved before it reached the human stage, just as through vast periods of time the earth evolved out of the nebulous matter into what it now is. Consciousness is involved in matter and is evolving through its association with matter. Inseparable companions, they are but two aspects of one thing—of the one reality. A center of consciousness working in matter builds a form about itself; at the earlier stages of evolution very simple forms; at the higher stages more and more complex forms. But the matter referred to is not always visible matter—matter that is known to the physical senses. Even in physical matter we have grades which are invisible and intangible, like the air and the ether,

and these graduations of rarer and rarer matter continue far beyond that point.

There is a point in evolution where consciousness becomes self-consciousness and then where the self-consciousness becomes the all-consciousness, without identity being lost. At the point the human race has now reached—roughly, the half-way point in the whole evolutionary journey—the individual consciousness is functioning a part of the time in visible matter and a part of the time in invisible matter. When a human being reaches the time for that change which we know as death the consciousness leaves this physical body and enters the invisible world, going on with life in a body composed of the matter of that world. Later the consciousness parts with this invisible body, and also in due course of time transfers its activities once more to the physical world, appearing again in an infant physical body which serves its purpose until the succeeding physical death. In this alternation from the visible to the invisible, from the grosser to the rare, from the outer to the inner, from the objective to the subjective, the soul finds its possibilities of evolution from lower to higher states of consciousness, each cycle carrying it to a higher point than it has previously attained. The method by which it grows is the acquirement of experience in the physical life and the working up of this experience into faculties or powers during the subjective life in the invisible world; somewhat analogous to the process by which a child grows, taking food at one hour of the day and assimilating it during the following hours, after which food is

again required for further growth. This succession of returns to the physical life is the soul's reincarnation; souls in evolution are much like children in study—they represent many grades of intelligence and many degrees of effort. Souls are like children in nature's school. Millions are in the kindergarten, other millions are in the grades, hundreds have advanced to the universities, while a few have finished their education and are voluntarily lingering here to act as teachers of the rest. These Theosophy knows as the Masters of Wisdom.

While the soul is thus evolving through the process of reincarnation it is, of course, subject to the natural laws of life and matter. By knowing these laws through theosophical study a man is enabled to work with nature in hastening his own evolution. He may thus accomplish in a few incarnations what would otherwise require many thousands of years. Man's chief source of suffering is his ignorance of his own nature and his failure to comprehend the unity of life; not understanding that all life is one and that every thought and desire and act in relation to the life that surrounds him must, because of that unity, react upon him in either beneficent or malevolent ways, for this principle of action and reaction applies to every phase of his existence.

The light it throws on the evolutionary journey and the suffering it thus enables people to avoid is one of the things that makes Theosophy of great practical value. It presents a definite system of self-development, of character building, of purification and illumination. "Salvation" according to

popular ideas is a matter of belief, supposed to be effective even if adopted at the last hour of life. Theosophy presents a system of unfoldment and spiritual enlightenment, its "salvation" being emancipation from the limitations of matter and the conscious realization of the fact of immortality. Theosophy is not a creed to be believed but a life to be lived.

Those who live the life gradually come into an entirely new way of looking upon existence. As the theosophical truths become realities to the consciousness a man begins to see and feel his power over circumstances—to comprehend that his fate is in his own hands. He learns the source of the misfortunes that befall him, and how to use his erstwhile wasted thought power. He learns to meet the results of his previous wrong thinking and acting philosophically, thus literally turning a misfortune to good account in the development of his soul powers. He loses all fear of death, because he finally comes clearly to see that there is no death, but only the transfer of his consciousness to the invisible body and the continuation of his life in the invisible world. He loses all fear of separation from his friends because he finds that it is but a temporary separation at most and that at a higher point in his evolution even that temporary separation disappears, for he learns to be conscious in both worlds while still living in the physical body. He also finds, as he advances, that he has changed his more or less vague hope of immortality to positive personal knowledge of the fact.